

A Study of the Aristocratic Ideal and the Theme  
of Moral Decline in Latin Love Elegy.

by

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and to the best of my knowledge and belief contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis argues that the love elegists show an original approach to the aristocratic ideal of service to the state and, more specifically, towards the subject of moral decline.

In the first chapter the aristocratic ideal and the traditional version of moral decline are outlined from the epigraphic and literary evidence of pre-Augustan times. It is concluded that the aristocratic ideal centred on service to the state through the public career and that the traditional concept of moral decline involved dereliction of duty towards the state. A more detailed analysis of this traditional concept based on the study of moral terminology in the works of Sallust and Livy is included in the form of an appendix. It is strongly recommended that this be read immediately after chapter one.

In chapter two there is an examination of the terminology used by the love elegists to describe the past, the ideal society and the causes and symptoms of moral decline. Their treatment of specific vices and virtues mentioned by the historians is also discussed and some comment is made on the different usage of moral terminology in the two genres. On the basis of this it is suggested that the love elegists significantly re-shape



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traditional aristocratic moral concepts, particularly concerning moral decline.

Next the treatment of the ideal society and the past is discussed in more depth. Chapter three shows how the love elegists reject the traditional aristocratic view of the ideal society as an austere and warlike community living in early Rome, replacing this with assorted Utopias of their own, both past and present. It is argued that they select many details from the traditional version of the past, but re-shape them both for humorous effect and, more seriously, in protest against war.

In chapter four the love elegists' treatment of private morality is explored. It is shown that, in spite of occasional signs of sympathy for the aristocratic moral code (found mainly in the works of Propertius), the love elegists borrow extensively from Roman comedy and generally make fun of the aristocratic ideal and the traditional concept of private moral decline.

The public career, which lies at the heart of the aristocratic ideal, is discussed in chapter five. Here it is suggested that, with rare exceptions, the love elegists approach the subject of the public career in a spirit either of antagonism or humour, which reflects their opposition to the aristocratic ideal.

Finally, it is argued in chapter six that the subjects of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline have a variety of literary functions in love elegy. It is concluded that the most important of these are their functions as vehicles for humour and protest. It is here that the real novelty of their treatment lies.

ABBREVIATIONS

C.I.L.      Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, various dates.

ORF<sup>2</sup>      Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta Liberae Rei  
Publicae, ed. Henrica Malcovati, 2nd ed.,  
1955, Milan.

R.O.L.      Remains of Old Latin, ed. E. Warmington,  
Loeb Classical Library, vols. 1-4, 1935-1938.

Journal titles are abbreviated in accordance with the  
practice of the Année Philologique.

Some titles of works by ancient authors have also been  
abbreviated, but it is anticipated that these will cause  
no difficulty.

Introduction : the critical background and  
the scope and intention of the thesis.

(The following comments contain only a very cursory glance at the literature which exists on love elegy, the aristocratic ideal and moral decline. Further details will be found in the footnotes and in the bibliography, which also contains details of works by the scholars mentioned below.)

The precise composition of the Roman aristocracy and the nature of its moral ideals have been the subjects of considerable research by scholars in the twentieth century, particularly in the last four decades. In Germany Matthias Gelzer produced an illuminating commentary on the aristocracy and its ideals in 1912 (translated and re-issued as The Roman nobility in 1969). This was followed up in 1939 by Syme's classic work on the end of the Republic, The Roman Revolution, which not only gave a provocative historical account of the opening of the Augustan age, but also studied the moral and political terminology of the period. A similar service was provided for the decades preceding the rule of Augustus by Lily Ross Taylor in Party Politics in the Age of Caesar (1949). J. Hellegouarc'h continued this study of moral and political terminology in Le Vocabulaire Latin des Relations et des Partis Politiques sous la République, Paris (1963). Meanwhile R. E. Smith had written an illuminating study of the relationship between the Roman aristocracy and Latin literature in the

third and second centuries B.C., The Aristocratic Epoch in Latin Literature (1947). However the most important scholar in the field of Roman moral and political thought in recent years is undoubtedly D. C. Earl, whose two books The Political Thought of Sallust (1961) and The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome (1967) are totally indispensable to an understanding of the aristocratic ideal and the traditional version of moral decline. My debt to all these authors, but particularly to Earl, must be constantly apparent. However my approach to the subjects of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline differs from theirs, being primarily literary rather than political.

Love elegy, once the Cinderella of Latin literature, has also received considerable attention in recent years. A bewildering variety of works has been written on elegy, but the names of a few authors stand out. K. F. Smith's commentary on Tibullus (1913), is still indispensable reading, while Propertius has been well served by Butler and Barber (1933) and Camps (1961-1967). More recently A. S. Hollis has produced a lively commentary on Ovid's Ars Amatoria I (1977). Some excellent collections of critical articles have also been published, notably Ovidiana (ed. Herescu, 1958), Critical Essays on Roman Literature, Elegy and Lyric (ed. Sullivan, 1962) and Ovid (ed. Binns, 1973). The student's work has been made very much easier by the appearance of comprehensive concordances to Tibullus (della Casa, 1964), Propertius (Schmeisser, 1972) and Ovid (Deferrari et al., 1939) and by Harrauer's bibliographies

to the Corpus Tibullianum (1971) and the elegies of Propertius (1973). Useful works covering all three elegists have been written by Day (1938), Copley (1956), Luck (1959) and Lilja (1965), while Propertius's poetry has been the subject of several important books, particularly those by Boucher (1965), Hubbard (1974) and Sullivan (1976), and Ovid's love poetry has been sympathetically discussed by Fränkel (1945) and Wilkinson (1955) in general critical studies of his works. A variety of important articles has also been written on elegy by authors too numerous to mention individually. However, among these, Nethercut and Galinsky deserve special attention. Finally there are two background books on literature which are indispensable to any student of Augustan poetry, G. Williams, Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry (1968) and F. Cairns, Generic composition in Greek and Roman poetry (1972).

Nevertheless, although so much valuable research has been done on the various aspects of aristocratic moral thought and the genre of love elegy, there is to my knowledge no single work devoted to the subjects of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline in Latin love elegy. The present study is a small attempt to remedy this lack. They are not concepts which are easily cordoned off. A genuinely comprehensive study of them would require excursions into many fields - historical, political, philosophical and literary. Such a study would require enormous resources of scholarship and would be impossibly vast. The scope of the present thesis is far more modest. It is

limited to studying the aristocratic ideal and moral decline as literary themes in Latin love elegy. Therefore other matters will be considered only when they impinge on this central topic.

The three main authors whose work is discussed in the thesis are Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid. Since Book 3 of the Corpus Tibullianum is generally considered spurious, only the first two books have been discussed. In the case of Propertius I have used whatever material seemed relevant from all four books of elegies. In evaluating Ovid's treatment of the motif I have concentrated on the Amores, Ars amatoria and Remedia Amoris, discussing and quoting from his other works only when they shed light on his love elegy. Since the genre of history provides many valuable contrasts to that of love elegy I have also included a brief outline of the motif of moral decline in the works of Sallust and Livy and a study of their usage of moral terminology in the form of an appendix. Unfortunately it has been impossible to discuss their works in detail.

In order to elucidate the love elegists' handling of the subjects as faithfully as possible, I have concentrated mainly on the texts and have limited citation and discussion of modern critical works. Nevertheless I have received considerable help from reading the works of modern scholars and I have tried to acknowledge all debts either in the footnotes or the bibliography.

The thesis argues that the love elegists took the traditional concept of moral decline, which derived chiefly from the moral ideal of the Roman aristocracy, and in order to achieve their literary ends re-shaped many of its moral terms and concepts, thus giving the subjects of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline an original and primarily humorous function in their works. The first task in proving this hypothesis is to describe the aristocratic moral ideal and the traditional concept of moral decline. The next step is to examine the love elegists' usage of moral terminology. This will provide a sound basis for analyzing their treatment of the major aspects of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline - the ideal society, private morality and the public career. Finally an attempt will be made to evaluate the literary functions of these subjects in elegy and to assess their relationship to each writer's work as a whole.



## CHAPTER ONE

### The aristocratic ideal and the traditional concept of moral decline

The aristocracy in Rome was the class of nobles who ruled the state. D.C. Earl points out that "In its strictest definition "nobilitas" was restricted to those families of which either in the past or the present one member, at least, had attained the consulship." <sup>1</sup> The ambitions and ideals of this class are given clearest expression in its funerary inscriptions and in Latin literature, particularly the genre of historiography, which recorded its achievements. Evidence from these sources suggests that the aristocracy was preoccupied with winning glory and power through the public career. Inevitably this preoccupation had a strong influence on its moral code.

The inscriptions which shed most light on the moral ideals of the early Roman aristocracy are the "elogia" of the Scipionic family (C.I.L. 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.15 etc.). These have already been analyzed in some detail by D.C. Earl and others, <sup>2</sup> but it may be useful to re-examine their main points here. The first of these "elogia" is the epitaph of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, consul in 298 B.C. and censor possibly in 290 B.C. (C.I.L. 1.7) :

"Cornelius Lucius Scipio Barbatus Gnaivod Patre  
prognatus fortis vir sapiensque - quolus forma  
virtutei parisuma  
fuit - consol censor aidilis quei fuit apud  
vos - Taurasia Cisauna  
Samnio cepit - subigit omne Loucanam opsidesque  
abdoucit."

He is commended for the qualities of "fortitudo",  
"sapientia", "forma" and "virtus". All of these, with the  
exception of "forma" are virtues typically associated with  
military and political prowess.<sup>3</sup> It is hardly surprising  
that they are followed by a list of his most important  
public offices and military exploits. Similarly in C.I.L.  
1.9 his son Lucius Cornelius Scipio, consul in 259B.C. and  
censor in 258B.C., is given the sweeping praise :

"Honc oino ploirume cosentiont R (omane)  
duonoro optumo fuise viro."

followed by an outline of the highlights of his career in  
politics, the army and the state religion.

The "elogium" of Publius Cornelius Scipio (C.I.L.  
1.10) is even more explicit about the virtues of the dead  
man, asserting that :

"Quei apice insigne Dial (is fl) aminis gesistei,  
mors perfe (cit) tua ut essent omnia brevia  
honos fama virtusque gloria atque ingenium,  
quibus sei in longa licu (i) set tibi utier vita,  
facile facteis superases gloriam maiorum."

This inscription displays a strong preoccupation with public recognition. The qualities of "honos", "fama" and "gloria" all involve public acclaim and the highly competitive attitude to the achievements of one's ancestors is further evidence of the aristocratic craving for applause. Although the man commemorated in the inscription died too young to have progressed far in the public career, it is clear that this was the arena in which he was expected to excel.

Similar expectations are evident in the epitaph of another young man who died prematurely (C.I.L. I, 11) :

"Magna sapientia multasque virtutes

astate quom parva possidet hoc saxum.

Quotet vita defect, non honos, honore,

is hic situs, quet nunquam victus est virtutel,

annos gnatus viginti is I (oc) eis mandatus,

ne qualitat honoris quet minus sit mandatus."

As in I.7 the dead man is credited with "sapientia"

and many other virtues, including "honos" and "virtus".

As Earl points out, "at Rome "sapientia" meant practical

political wisdom and was of little use unless expressed in

words at conferences and meetings of the senate."

The importance given to the public display of

virtues is apparent in the last line of this inscription,

which contains an anxious justification of the young man's

failure to hold office. Evidently such a failure was expected to provoke comment and question from the passerby.

Another extremely revealing inscription is the "elogium" of Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio Hispanus, probably the son of Hispallus and "praetor peregrinus" in 139B.C. The epitaph lists the offices held and is then followed by the "elogium" :

"Virtutes generis meis moribus accumulavi,  
progeniem genui, facta patris petiei.

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Maiorum optenui laudem, ut sibi me esse creatum  
laetentur; stirpem nobilitavit honor."

The most interesting feature of this is the insistence on upholding the honour of the family. The inscription implies that the glorious deeds of one's ancestors must be imitated and, if possible, surpassed. A strong pre-occupation with succeeding generations is also evident in the emphasis on the begetting of children (5) and the proud claim that the dead man's honour has ennobled his offspring (7).

The evidence for the moral qualities expected in women is more scanty and is mainly literary rather than epigraphic. Nevertheless a few illuminating inscriptions do exist. Probably the most useful of these is the epitaph of Claudia from a tablet or pillar found at Rome, now lost, c. 135-120B.C. (Warmington R.O.L., v. 4, fr. 18, p. 12):

"Hospes, quod deico paullum est; asta ac pellege.  
 Heic est sepulcrum hau pulcrum pulcrai feminae.  
 Nomen parentes nominarunt Claudiam.  
 Suum mareitum corde deilexit suo.  
 Gnatos duos creavit, horum alterum  
 in terra linquit, alium sub terra locat.  
 Sermone lepidio, tum autem incessu commodo.  
 Domum servavit, lanam fecit. Dixi. Abei."

The virtues for which Claudia is commended are dedication to her husband and children, charm in speech accompanied by propriety of bearing, and domestic skill. Although appreciation of these virtues was not limited to the aristocracy,<sup>5</sup> the inscription does give a useful picture of the aristocratic concept of feminine virtue.

These epitaphs suggest that by the end of the second century B.C. a strong aristocratic moral tradition had been formulated which held that the virtues associated with prowess in the public career were to be admired, that failure to display such prowess could be censured and that men should be concerned to outstrip the achievements of their ancestors and hand on a glorious record to their descendants. This same code prescribed for women the virtues of dedication to family and devotion to domestic tasks, especially to working in wool. Unfortunately funerary inscriptions have two main disadvantages as tools for reconstructing complex moral concepts. In the first place

they are necessarily brief and can therefore convey only limited information and secondly their main aim is to praise, which means that they say little about the negative aspects of morality. In order to fill out the skeleton framework provided by epigraphic evidence, it will therefore be necessary to make a brief examination of the literary evidence for the aristocratic moral tradition.

R.E. Smith argues very cogently that the aristocracy strongly influenced the nature and quantity of literature written in Rome in the third and second centuries B.C. and even exercised direct censorship on it.<sup>6</sup> It is easy to see what made this control of literature possible. During this period literacy was confined almost entirely to the members of the aristocracy and their households. However the ideal of public service universally accepted by this class left the aristocrat little time or scope to dedicate himself to writing. Nevertheless the writers of this period (who were mostly of low class, often freed slaves) were dependent on the patronage of the nobility in order to survive. Thus the nobles were able to exert a powerful influence on the content and treatment of literature.

The nature of this influence was determined largely by the attitudes of the aristocracy. The key to these attitudes lies in their obsession with the public career. They wanted writers to refrain from presenting their lives

and careers unfavourably and, where possible, to celebrate their exploits and to explain their motives and policies. The effects of their influence varied in the two broad fields of literature, poetry and prose, for as Smith points out, "owing to the different content of the two forms the nobles adopted correspondingly different attitudes."<sup>7</sup> Since the influence of the genre has a very important bearing on the treatment of moral issues, it will be best to consider poetry and prose separately.

For convenience the poetry of the third and second centuries B.C. may be divided into four classes, according to its content. Firstly there was poetry, usually on "trivial" subjects, which was written as a fireside recreation and probably disappeared into the fire shortly after composition.<sup>8</sup> Poetry of this kind was intended for the restricted audience of the nobility and was often written by the nobles themselves. Thus it required no censorship or control. Secondly there was epic poetry celebrating the exploits of Roman armies under noble commanders. This might be expected to reach a somewhat larger audience through the medium of recitations and its composition was encouraged by the aristocracy, since it reflected credit on them. Thirdly there was satire, which was often directed against the nobles, but was tolerated by them as a form of internal criticism unlikely to reach the ears of the Roman plebs or of foreigners. Finally there were plays written in verse and these were the chief target of

aristocratic influence and censorship, since "the stage was the one means of communicating ... with the Roman people at large." <sup>9</sup>

Plays in verse were of two main types - tragedy and comedy. It seems likely that the nobles found the style and sentiments of tragedy generally inoffensive and therefore exercised little control over its composition. However there is evidence to show that they applied direct censorship to comedy. A striking illustration of the severity of this censorship during the third century can be seen in the case of Naevius who was first imprisoned and later banished for offending members of the nobility by criticizing them in his comedies. Unfortunately too little remains of his work to give an accurate picture of his moral attitudes, but he seems to have been sympathetic to many of the aristocratic ideals. Thus in one of his "fabulae palliatae" a character exhorts his sons to return to a life of "virtus" and give up sloth (R.O.L. v.2, p. 102, fr. 90-91):

"Primum ad virtutem ut redeatis, abeatis ab ignavia,  
domos patris patriam ut colatis potius quam peregri  
probra."

and even the amusing fragment of gossip about the love affairs of a great statesman<sup>10</sup> reflects the aristocratic view that love constitutes a shameful distraction from the affairs of state. Moreover the few surviving fragments of his epic poem on the Punic War display a high regard for Roman achievements in battle. The fact that a



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writer who had so much sympathy for the ideals of the nobles could be so harshly treated by them shows the stringency of their control over literature at this time.

Perhaps in response to the fate of Naevius, Plautus showed more caution and restricted himself to writing "fabulae palliatae" in which the setting and characters were Greek. He thus avoided the danger of offending Roman sentiment or impugning Roman morals. It also seems likely that his characterization was influenced by a wary regard for aristocratic sentiments. Plautus's whores are not only Greek, they are grasping, scheming and vicious. Smith argues that there is a sound reason for this : "the hetaera could not be shown on the Roman stage as a generous character, since the Roman matrons would have objected; he was therefore compelled to make her an inferior character with little to commend her." <sup>11</sup>

Apart from subtly shaping his treatment of character and setting, the aristocratic moral ideal also seems to have had a direct influence on Plautus's work. Many of the moral notions cherished by the aristocracy play an important role in his work, but it is interesting to note that his treatment of them varies. As D.C. Earl points out, Plautus uses the aristocratic ideal "both for direct comment and for comic effect." <sup>12</sup> This ambivalence in his approach is clearly apparent in his handling of the important subjects of devotion to the public career, the

role of the family, nostalgia for the past, contemporary decadence and the qualities of women.

Thus in Amphitryo (prol. 75 and 648-653) he shows a high regard for "virtus" in war and in Mostellaria he portrays Philolaches as bitterly regretting his loss of "res, fides, fama, virtus, decus" (Most. 144). Similarly in Trinummus he describes the goals of good men in terms of the virtues normally associated with the public career (Tri. 273-274) :

"boni sibi haec expetunt, rem, fidem, honorem,  
gloriam et gratiam : hoc probis pretiumst."

However this respectful treatment of the public career and the virtues associated with it is balanced elsewhere by exuberant humour. This is particularly apparent in Truculentus in the absurd picture of Stratophanes, who prides himself on his "virtus" (494) and in Miles Gloriosus. In this play Plautus not only makes fun of the "gloriae" (22) and "virtus" (33 (used in the plural here), 1043, 1326) of the braggart soldier, but also praises women for possessing more "audacia" than either cavalry or foot-soldiers (465-6). Moreover the holding of public office provides Plautus with material for an amusing skit in Persa 53-80, and in Mercator 833 ff. there is a humorous burlesque on patriotic sentiment.

A similar ambivalence is apparent in his handling of

family ties. Although there are several characters in his plays who display a strong sense of "pietas" towards members of their families (such as the two dutiful wives in Stichus and Lysiteles in Trinummus), Plautus also uses aristocratic conceptions about the family for humorous effect. Thus Pleusicles in Miles Gloriosus tries to persuade Periplectomenus of the advantages of marriage by using the high-flown argument (703-704) :

"At illa laus est, magno in genere et in divitiis  
maximis

liberos hominem educare, generi monumentum et sibi."

The context in which this statement is uttered makes it wholly absurd, but it is nevertheless a pithy summary of the aristocratic attitude to children.

The influence of aristocratic moral values can also be readily detected in Plautus's handling of the theme of moral decline. He identifies the chief symptoms of contemporary decadence as extravagance (Aulularia 1-499 ff), lack of respect for property accompanied by dissolute living (Trin. 1.314-315), the disappearance of thrift (Trin. 1029), devotion to shameful, time wasting love affairs (Pseud. 314ff), failure to consider the public good (Trin. 1.30ff) and to uphold the honour of one's ancestors (Trin. 642ff) and corruption in the public career (Trin. 1032-1034). It is obvious from these passages that the aristocratic ideal of service to the state was already

firmly established by Plautus's time. All the vices which he castigates have some bearing on the public career - either because they involve direct dereliction of duty or because they waste time and money which could have been spent on acquiring office and a fine reputation. In many of the passages there is a humorous undertone, but the humour has no sting. Unlike Naevius, Plautus did not satirize the Roman nobility directly. His humour is always cautious.

The same ambivalence and cautious humour is apparent in his handling of the qualities of women. As mentioned above,<sup>13</sup> his courtesans are modelled on a stock type, already well established in Greek New Comedy, memorable chiefly for their greed, extravagance and deceit. However his treatment of freeborn wives is more circumspect. Although he occasionally lampoons them for their extravagance (Aul. 1.499ff), nagging (Miles Gl. 680) or even domestic incompetence (Miles Gl. 686ff), Plautus also shows some sympathy for the injustices suffered by good women (Mercator 817ff) and includes in his plays a few virtuous female characters. It is perhaps significant that when he does portray virtuous women, their moral qualities are those which the aristocracy considered particularly valuable. Thus Alcmena takes pride in her modesty, self-control, fear of god, affection towards her family and good conduct as a wife (Amphitryo 840-842) and Adelphasium is commended for her modesty of speech

(Poenulus 1221-1222). Similarly Palaestra (Rudens 190-196) claims that she has shown "pietas" towards her family and the gods and denies that she has ever acted "indecore inique, immodeste" (194). And in Stichus Panegyris and her sister place great emphasis on the value of "officium", "pietas" (Stichus 1-50 passim) and conduct which will safeguard a woman's reputation (114-115).

Although Plautus's plays are set in Greece and are predominantly humorous in tone, they contain many typically Roman elements in their emphasis on the virtues of service to the state, respect for the gods, proper conduct in public affairs, thrift and devotion to home and family. The fact that these values receive so much emphasis in his work indicates that they were very firmly established in Roman thought at this time.

The other main source of literary evidence for the aristocratic moral tradition in the late third century B.C. is provided by the surviving fragments of the works of Ennius. Cicero says of Ennius "pinxit maxima facta patrum" (Tusc. Disp. 1.15.34) and this preoccupation with the glorious deeds of the early Romans is clearly apparent in the surviving fragments of the Annals. The most illuminating of these is the sketch of a nobleman's friend quoted by Gellius (R.O.L.V.I. p.78) and thought by some to be a self portrait of Ennius.<sup>14</sup> The passage describes the toil of Geminus Servilius in discharging his civic duties and the many fine qualities of his friend who, in addition to

being

" ... doctus fidelis

suavis homo facundus, suo contentus, beatus, scitus."

shows great respect for ancient customs :

" ... multa tenens antiqua, sepulta vetustas

quae facit, et mores veteresque novosque, tenens res

multorum veterum, leges divumque hominumque."

The reverence for the customs of the past which characterizes Roman moral thought and descriptions of moral decline is already strongly evident in this passage. Indeed Ennius saw respect for ancient customs as the very foundation of the Roman state, for elsewhere (Annals fragment 467, R.O.L.V.I., p. 174) he asserts that :

"Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque."

The other notable feature of Ennius's moral thought in the Annals is his high regard for virtue in politics and warfare. He places considerable emphasis on the need for "sapientia" and a proper regard for "iura" in the conduct of public affairs, deploring the use of "vis" and "ferrum" to settle disputes. (Ann. 262-268, R.O.L.V.I., p. 98). However this approval of restraint and good counsel does not preclude a strong appreciation of the "virtus" of the Roman army (Ann. 333-5, R.O.L.V.I., p. 122) and of the "gloria" won by its soldiers (Ann. 360-362, p. 132).

Similarly in his tragedies, although they are

ostensibly concerned with Greek and not Roman characters, Ennius shows a typically Roman regard for the political and military virtues of "gloria" (R.O.L.V.I, fr. 10-12, p. 222), "industria" (fr. 83-84, p. 246), "ius" (fr. 200-201 p. 290), "virtus" and "libertas" (fr. 308-311 p. 332). He also voices his distrust of "otium" (fr. 241-8, p. 308), contending that it creates uncertainty and inability to act decisively.<sup>15</sup> His treatment of all these moral qualities is entirely serious in tone and marks Ennius as a sympathetic supporter of the aristocratic moral code. Indeed he seems to have worked directly under aristocratic patronage, for Smith records the story that he was taken to Ambracia by Fulvius Nobilior, specifically so that he might write up the accomplishments of his patron.<sup>16</sup>

The surviving poetry of the second century B.C. reflects a similar set of moral attitudes to those of the third century. The scanty fragments remaining from the tragedies of Marcus Pacuvius (c. 220-130B.C.) and Lucius Accius (c. 170-86B.C.) suggest that they were both sympathetic to the aristocratic ideal. One of Pacuvius's characters expresses a typically Roman contempt for men engaged in "ignava opera et philosopha sententia" (fr. 11, p. 164, R.O.L.V.2) and elsewhere in his work the quality of "virtus" is applauded (fr. 153, p. 218, R.O.L.V.2). And Accius, although he seems to consider nobility of birth less important than merit, gives strong emphasis to some of the moral qualities valued by the aristocracy. Thus in a fragment from one of Accius's Roman plays the character Decius

yearns to emulate his father's bravery in battle (fr. 14, p. 558, R.O.L.V.2) and elsewhere Brutus is applauded for his "sapientia" (fr. 33, p. 562, R.O.L.V.2). Fragments of tragedies from unknown authors of the same period also stress the qualities of "sapientia", "virtus", "honor" (fr. 98, p. 616, R.O.L.V.2) and "pietas" (fr. 141, p. 622, R.O.L.V.2).

The works of the second major Roman comic dramatist, Terence (c. 185-160 B.C.), show a very different spirit from those of Plautus. Terence's plays reflect an extremely kind, responsible sense of morality. He shows little interest in public affairs and the moral issues in his plays generally revolve around the emotional relationships within families. The virtues he seems to admire most in both men and women are kindness (Adelphoe 1.861, where "facilitas" and "clementia" are praised; Andria 1.113-114), self-restraint and moderation (Andria 1.58 and 1.92), contentment (Heaut. passim) and a sense of responsibility towards others (Adelphoe 685ff). Indeed the only major outcry against moral decline in his plays is prompted by Aeschinus's apparent callous and irresponsible desertion of the girl he has made pregnant. This causes Geta to exclaim in outrage (Adelphoe 303-304) :

"vis egestas iniustitia solitudo infamia  
hocine saeculum! o scelera, o genera sacrilega, o  
hominem inpium!"

Terence's portrayal of women is generally sympathetic and this sympathy extends to courtesans as well as freeborn



women. Bacchis is praised for her generous action which covers her with "nobilitas" and "gloria" (Hecyra 797) and even when Terence portrays courtesans as scheming and amoral (like Philotis and Syra in Hecyra 58ff.) he still shows a compassionate insight into their motives. The other main virtues for which Terence commends women are "pudicitia" or modesty (Andria 1.74-76, Heaut. 226, Hecyra 165-6) and the traditional domestic skill of working in wool (Andria 75-76, Heaut. 282-301).

Although Terence shows little interest in writing about the public career,<sup>17</sup> he is obviously proud of his connection with aristocrats who had achieved distinction in public office (Adelphoe. Prologue 1.19-21) and he has a strong sense of the responsibilities associated with high social position. Thus in Adelphoe, 501 ff, Hegio earnestly advises Demea:

"quam vos facillume agitis, quam estis maxime  
potentes dites fortunati nobiles,  
tam maxime vos aequo animo aequa noscere  
oportet, si vos vultis perhiberi probos."

Although there are only brief references to the aristocratic moral ideal in Terence's works, it seems reasonable to assume that he was fundamentally sympathetic to it.

The fragments surviving from the works of the second century satirist Lucilius (c. 180-101B.C.) contain an interesting presentation of several aspects of the

aristocratic moral ideal. Lucilius judges the Roman aristocracy by their own traditional moral standards and finds them wanting. He attacks their gluttony and luxury (R.O.L.V.3 fr.200-210; fr.277; fr.470-471; fr.1234), their belief that their "nobilitas" gives them an excuse to do wrong with impunity (loc. cit. fr.270-271), their "nequitia", "petulantia" and "prodigitas" (loc. cit. fr.269), their use of bribery in election campaigns (loc. cit. 1193 and 1194-5), their disregard for legal claims (loc. cit. 1144), their readiness to swindle, trick and exploit while acting the "bonum virum" in the forum (loc. cit. 1145-1151)<sup>18</sup> and their departure from proper standards of "virtus". In 1194-1195 he comments scathingly that "aurum" and "ambitio" have now become the hallmarks of "virtus" and he goes on to give a definition of genuine "virtus" (1196-1208). This passage constitutes an extremely interesting re-statement of the aristocratic ideal of "virtus". Lucilius argues that "virtus" consists of paying a fair price in business dealings, knowing right from wrong, giving what is due to honour, shunning bad men and manners and cultivating good, and (1207-1208) :

"commoda praeterea patriae prima putare,

deinde parentum, tertia iam postremaque nostra."

Service to one's country, which Lucilius upholds as the foremost activity of "virtus", is the lynchpin of the aristocratic ideal.

Lucilius's descriptions of feminine vice and virtue also reflect many of the typical moral attitudes of the aristocracy as well as displaying a vivid and rather brutal sense of humour. Thus he describes a virtuous spinster as "lanificam ... siccam atque abstemiam" (276) and in 747 (which is presumably a sketch of the ideal female slave) he sets the following criteria of excellence :

"lignum caedat pensum faciat aedes verrat vapulet."

If feminine virtue for Lucilius consists of arid chastity and domestic drudgery, feminine vice lies in the attempt to escape such restrictions. He comments sardonically that wives can always find an excuse for going out (1096-1097), that they dress up for other men but not for their husbands (534-5) and that as soon as their husbands depart on a journey "lana opus omne perit" (1104). And in 1.638-9 he contrasts the frugality and virtue of the wife of ancient times with the laxity of her modern counterpart.

In the poetry of the first century B.C. there is a considerable change in the treatment of moral issues. In the first place there is a change in genre. No comedies survive from this period and indeed it seems likely that few were written. Instead there is the didactic poetry of Lucretius the lyric poetry of Catullus, the varied pastoral, didactic and epic of Vergil, the satirical, lyric and didactic poetry of Horace. In the works of

these poets there is a new sophistication of poetic technique, which can be explained partly by the influence of Greek culture at this time. Accompanying this is a new sophistication of moral thought. The established tenets of the aristocratic moral code still have an important place in the poetry of this century, but for the first time they are subjected to tentative scrutiny and question.

The simplistic moral attitudes of the third and second century poets give way in the work of Lucretius to a far subtler treatment of morality and of such themes as primitive society and the ideal life. His moral attitudes, derived from Epicureanism, are very different from those of the aristocratic code. His vision of the past contains no jingoistic images of austere Roman warriors of astonishing virtue. He does not idealize the past (Bk. 5.1412-3), but instead postulates a gradual evolution of social customs. Like the love elegists after him,<sup>19</sup> he denounces seafaring (Bk 5.1000) and the horrors of war (Bk 5.999, 1305-7, 1435). And although he strongly disapproves of the desire for luxurious adornment (Bk 5.1423ff), the reason for his disapproval is that this leads to war and misery. Moreover he argues that wealth, honour, praise, family and reputation (all highly prized by the Roman aristocracy) cannot ensure happiness (Bk 6.12-14).

In the poetry of Catullus it is possible to detect the first signs of the love elegists' characteristic

approach to morality. He gives little support to the traditional moral code, apart from the censure of "otium"<sup>20</sup> in fragment 51a, the praise of Aurunculeia's "pudicitia" in Poem 61.220 and the emphasis on continuing the name of a noble family in the same poem (Poem 61.66ff and 208-211). He makes fun of soldiers (Poems 28, 29 and orators (Poem 53), describes his own brush with the public career in gay, irreverent terms (Poems 10, 28) and uses many of the moral terms traditionally associated with the public career in the context of his own love affair with Lesbia.<sup>21</sup> In their different ways Lucretius and Catullus usher in the complex, thoughtful approach to morality which characterizes the works of the Augustan Age poets, Vergil,<sup>22</sup> Horace and the love elegists.

This cursory survey of poetry up to the Augustan Age suggests that the majority of poets accepted the aristocratic moral ideal. Indeed several of its features (such as respect for the "mos maiorum" and the importance of proper conduct in public affairs) which are given brief expression in inscriptions are amplified and clarified in the works of poets like Ennius and Lucilius. Most of the poets who touch on the subject of moral decline see its main symptoms as contempt for the "mos maiorum", arrogance or corruption in the public career, laziness, luxury and extravagance. The handling of moral themes varies considerably in the different genres of poetry, but although there are humorous skits on the aristocratic ideal as early

as the time of Plautus, it is never openly challenged or parodied in poetry until the first century B.C.<sup>23</sup> At this time a more thoughtful, critical approach to the aristocratic ideal becomes noticeable in poetry.

In prose the picture is somewhat different. During the third and second centuries B.C. Latin prose was entirely utilitarian and consisted almost exclusively of historiography aimed at celebrating the exploits of the ruling class and explaining its motives and policies. Even in the first century when prose branched into new areas, it still kept this as one of its primary functions. Consequently the fullest expositions of the aristocratic moral ideal are to be found in prose, particularly in the works of Cato, Cicero and Sallust. However their expositions of the aristocratic moral ideal and their homage to Roman political and military achievements are often accompanied by trenchant criticism of certain members of the aristocracy. This is hardly surprising. Although these writers had vigorous public careers themselves, all three of them were "novi homines" and, as talented outsiders, were critical of the complacency of the established nobility.<sup>24</sup> Like Lucilius, they judged the aristocrats by their own traditional moral standards and found them wanting.

The aristocratic moral tradition makes its first important appearance in Latin prose in the surviving fragments of Cato's works.<sup>25</sup> The concept of moral decline is

already firmly established in these. Cato (234-149B.C.), a political outsider who rose to the consulship (195B.C.) and the censorship (184B.C.) without the benefit of noble birth, suggests that moral excellence lies in the pursuit of "virtus", "gloria" and "bene facta" in the service of the state. (Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta, fr. 64, 94, 141, 146).<sup>26</sup> He looks back with nostalgia to the ancient moral standards of the Romans and their strong sense of "fides" (ORF<sup>2</sup> fr. 18, 144, 200) and when defending himself against an attack by his political enemies claims that his own life has been marked by personal austerity and integrity in the public service (ORF<sup>2</sup> passim esp. fr. 203 from the speech De sumptu suo).<sup>27</sup> He attacks the decadent "mores" of his own time and sees as the primary symptoms of moral decline the political vices of cruelty, oppression and breaches of "fides" (Orig. fr. 69; 58, 59 and the speech against Ser. Galba on behalf of the plundered Lusitanians, ORF<sup>2</sup>), abuse of wealth in general (Orig. fr. 95, CRF<sup>2</sup> fr. 141) and of public funds in particular by the nobles (ORF<sup>2</sup> fr. 224), luxury and ostentation in building (ORF<sup>2</sup> fr. 185), furniture (ORF<sup>2</sup> 98, 110) and food (ORF<sup>2</sup> 96, 145, 146) and feminine arrogance, self indulgence (see Cic. De Senect. 14) and luxury, especially when accompanied by the decay of ancestral custom and religious observance. (Orig. fr. 113-115; 118). However his respect for the "mos maiorum" does not include a slavish regard for noble birth. His definition of moral excellence rests on achievement, not lineage (ORF<sup>2</sup> fr. 18, 144).

Dorey points out that among the motives which affected classical historians were a sense of obligation to provide a record for posterity and the belief that historiography was a suitable adjunct to an active career in public life.<sup>28</sup> In Cato's work these two motives are accompanied by a fervent moral didacticism and a shrewd appreciation of the value of historiography as a political weapon. As Badian says, he uses it for "polemic and apologia".<sup>29</sup> Similar motives can be detected in the works of all the major prose writers down to the Augustan age.

This outlook is clearly evident in the prose of the first century B.C., which reflects an overwhelming pre-occupation with political self-justification. Many of the most cherished ideals of the aristocratic code are distorted into weapons of propaganda in the murky politics of this period. The three major first century prose writers Caesar, Sallust and Cicero all had turbulent public careers and made bitter enemies. In their works political invective is typically couched in moral terms and their opponents are often branded as morally decadent. It would be virtually impossible and wholly fruitless in a thesis of this kind to discuss the political implications of their approach to morality.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless a brief glance at some of their work may provide a useful insight into the aristocratic tradition on moral decline.<sup>31</sup>

Cicero's prose output was enormous in size and varied in content and form.



Like Cato, Cicero had enormous respect for the "mos maiorum" and looked back with nostalgia to a past society characterized by personal austerity, integrity in the public career and devotion to the service of the state (De Re Publica 1.1ff., De Officiis 1.11.36, 1.13.39-40, Pro Sest. 66.139). It was presumably out of deference to the high moral standards of this past society that he set several of his philosophical works in the time of Scipio the younger (e.g. Tusc. Disp., De Senect., De Amicit., De Re Pub.)

The virtues which he approves most warmly, whether they appear in people of the past or the present, are those associated with service to the state, such as "religio", "dignitas", "gravitas", "auctoritas", "fides", "constantia", "magnitudo animi" (Pro Sest. 66.139, Balb. 5.13, Vatin. 17.40, De Prov. Cons. 9.22-3) and "virtus" in the public career (Verr. 5.181, De Offic. 1.26.92, 3.26.99). The vices which he attacks are almost always those which threaten the state either directly, such as "scelus", "audacia", "crudelitas" (De Prov. Cons. 1.2, 4.3, Verr. 5.42, In Vatin 1.2, Pro Sest. 9.22) or indirectly, such as "desidia", "inertia", "libidines" (De Prov. Cons. 9.24, Pro Sest. 10.22-3). This ideal of devotion to the state lies at the centre of Cicero's moral and political thought and forms the basis of his blueprint for the reform of politics in Rome. He exhorts all citizens to devote themselves strenuously to

creating a stable society characterized by "otium cum dignitate".

He argues that the foundations of such a society are (Pro Sest. 46.98) "religiones, auspicia, potestates magistratum, senatus auctoritas, leges, mos maiorum, iudicia, iuris dictio, fides, provinciae, imperii laus, res militaris, aerarium." and implies that there was greater respect for these institutions in earlier times. His attacks on contemporary decadence centre on the harm done to these institutions by the monopolization of office and the abuse of power by unscrupulous nobles.

Cicero shows a dynamic, impressive and serious approach to moral issues, but it is important to remember that his diatribes are not entirely dispassionate analyses of Roman moral behaviour. Usually they serve some special purpose - to discredit a defendant (e.g. the orations against Verres, Catiline, Vatinius), to popularize a pet project (in the Pro Sest.) or to advance Cicero's own political career (most of the speeches before 47B.C. have this as one of their aims). There is also considerable variation in his treatment of morality in the different types of prose that he wrote. In the speeches he often adopts the stance of a moral crusader, using moral invective for political ends, but his letters contain less moral fervour and fewer outcries about moral decline, while his philosophical works reflect yet another set of moral attitudes in which a strong Greek influence is apparent. Never-

theless, in spite of these internal variations, his works are a valuable source of evidence for the development of the aristocratic tradition on morality and moral decline in the first century B.C.

Sallust shows many similarities to Cicero in his approach to the subject of moral decline.<sup>33</sup> His vision of a morally upright society is set in Rome before the destruction of Carthage in 146B.C. (Bellum Catilinum 5-9). It is a society characterized by political harmony, prowess in warfare, devotion to the state and austerity in private life. Like Cicero, he sets "virtus" at the top of his hierarchy of virtues and defines it in terms of personal achievement in the service of the state. He also shows considerable approval of the other dynamic virtues of "labor" and "industria" and the political virtues of "concordia", "aequitas", "probitas" and "fides". The vices which he castigates as symptoms of moral decline - "avaritia", "ambitio", "lubido", "largitio", "superbia", "licentia", "insolentia", "crudelitas", "luxuria", "lascivia", "sumptus" - are all associated with political corruption and threats to the welfare of the state. Even such apparently private vices as feminine wantonness and extravagance, and lavish expenditure on private buildings are associated in Sallust's works with conspiracy, violence and direct attacks on the "res publica". Sallust had a close personal involvement in the politics of his

time and he uses moral invective partly as a weapon in his own interests, but he seems also to have felt a genuine conviction that standards of public morality had declined in his own times. His response to this was to set himself up as a moral crusader, preaching a return to the traditional moral code of the ancient Roman aristocracy. It is ironic that the most vivid re-statement of this code should have come from a writer who felt such intense hostility to the nobles of his own time.

Several important facts about the aristocratic tradition on moral decline emerge from this brief survey of the epigraphic and literary evidence. It is clear that even as early as the third century B.C. the aristocracy in Rome had established a moral code which defined virtue for men in terms of service to the state and for women in terms of dedication to home and family. By means of both direct censorship and indirect influence the aristocracy succeeded in imposing at least a nominal acceptance of this moral code on all the major writers of the third and second centuries B.C. Even in the first century B.C., when most writers were less susceptible to direct control by the nobility, the aristocratic ideal still dominated the approach to moral issues in Latin literature. Under the influence of this aristocratic ideal the majority of writers up to the Augustan age pictured the ideal society in terms of rustic simplicity and selfless devotion to the public good and identified the major symptoms of moral

decline as extravagance and corruption of a type which threatened the well-being of the state.

The treatment of the theme of moral decline varies considerably in the different genres of writing, but is generally serious in tone. In the prose genres it became associated very early with the exposition of the traditional aristocratic moral code and was frequently used for didactic and propagandist ends. In the verse genres there is a wider range of approaches to the theme. However most verse writers before the Augustan age treat it with caution and it is not extensively used as a subject for humour until the emergence of the new genre of love elegy. The originality of the love elegists' approach to the theme can be best understood by examining their treatment of the traditional moral terminology and concepts.

## CHAPTER TWO

Word study : the moral terminology of the love elegists

Inspection of the epigraphic and literary evidence has shown that the aristocratic moral tradition centres around the ideal of service to the state. The most vivid expression of this ideal is found in the genre of historiography, which was largely concerned with recording the achievements of the aristocracy. A close examination of the moral terminology used by the two major historians of the first century B.C., Sallust and Livy, reveals that the traditional concept of moral decline also centres around the subject of service to the state.<sup>1</sup> Both Sallust and Livy present the ideal society as set in early Rome and characterized by the virtues typically associated with the public career - political harmony ("concordia"), excellence in warfare and public office ("virtus"), justice ("aequitas"), integrity ("probitas"), honour ("fides") and industry ("labor", "industria") in public affairs, and the pursuit of glory ("gloria") in the service of the state. Associated with these is a host of related virtues - "prudentia", "disciplina", "modestia", "clementia", "integritas", "severitas", "constantia" which are also military or political. A supporting role is played in this society by the apparently private virtues of austerity ("abstinentia"), "pietas", modesty and chastity ("pudor", "pudicitia"). However these

qualities are also presented as having a strong influence on the welfare of the state.

Both historians see the influx of foreign wealth into Rome after the Punic Wars as a major cause of moral decline. Other contributing factors are the removal of external threats with the destruction of Carthage and strife between the orders. They argue that moral decadence has reached its worst point in Rome in their own times and they identify as its major symptoms the political vices of "ambitio", "audacia", "crudelitas", "insolentia", "largitio", "licentia", "saevitia" and "superbia", and the private vices of "avaritia", "luxuria", "sumptus", "desidia", "ignavia", "socordia", "lascivia" and "lubido" (or "libido"). Once again these private moral qualities have a strong impact on the state.

Against this background of intense preoccupation with the public career and the welfare of the state, the moral attitudes of the love elegists stand out in strong contrast. This can be best appreciated by examining firstly their choice and usage of moral terms in describing the ideal society and the causes and symptoms of moral decline and then their treatment of the moral terms used by the historians. If legitimate comparisons are to be made with the moral terminology used by the historians two important points must be considered. In the first place some of the terms used by the historians are

inadmissible in the metre of love elegy and equivalents must be sought for these words.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, as D.C. Earl points out : "Words are anything but fixed. Meanings will not stay in place but slip and slide into each other."<sup>3</sup> Many of the moral terms used by the historians were words in common usage which had taken on a specialized political meaning. They do not necessarily retain this meaning when used in love elegy. It is also important to remember that the individual love elegists vary in their treatment of moral terminology. For this reason they will be considered separately.

The first of the love elegists, Tibullus, presents a picture of moral decline which is significantly different from the traditional one reflected in the works of Sallust and Livy. There are superficial similarities, but these are far outweighed by the differences. The elegies in which Tibullus includes the theme of moral decline vary enormously in tone and intention, but are generally consistent with regard to his choice of moral vocabulary.

His visions of the ideal society are not set exclusively in early Rome like those of the historians, but have a range of settings from the mythical Golden Age to the Italian countryside of his own time.<sup>4</sup> They also reflect a range of moods, sometimes humorous, sometimes serious. Like Sallust and Livy he usually pictures



the ideal society as characterized by reverence for the gods and a life of rustic austerity. He seldom uses abstract single words to describe moral qualities, but rather illustrates them in pictorial phrases. Thus in his opening elegy worship of the gods appears as a component of the ideal rural existence which he would like to lead with Delia, but he does not use the word "pietas" to describe this. Instead he builds up a mosaic from the images of specific rites he intends to perform (1.1.11ff) :

"nam veneror, seu stipes habet desertus in agris  
seu vetus in trivio florida sarta lapis." etc.

This reverence for the gods is accompanied by some of the traditional features of the ideal society - poverty, contentment, hard work in the fields and a life of austerity. Tibullus prays for a life of "paupertas" (1.1.5) and emphasizes the poverty of his farm ("pauperis agri", 19; "exigui ... soli", 22; "exiguo pecori", 33; "paupere mensa", 37; "parva seges", 43). He pictures himself working as a farmer ("rusticus", 8), content with little ("contentus vivere parvo", 25) and using only humble earthenware vessels like the countryman of old ("antiquus ... agrestis", 40). He rejects "aurum" (1.1.1, 1.1.51) and prefers to leave wealth ("divitias") to somebody else (1.1.1, 1.1.49). The tone of the poem is escapist, but not predominantly farcical. Tibullus shows genuine enthusiasm for the rustic virtues he depicts. The chief divergence of this vision of the

ideal society from that of the historians is that Tibullus's "paupertas" is not associated with the virtue of hardihood ("labor") in war (which he explicitly rejects - 1.1.3), but with a life of love and "inertia" (1.1.5, 1.1.58), which Sallust and Livy see as a symptom of moral decadence.

A similar vision of the ideal society appears in 1.10, where Tibullus wistfully pictures religious worship "cum paupere cultu" (19) in an age when "fides" was better kept (19). Here again there is explicit rejection of wealth ("divitis ... auri", 7) and war ("bella", 7) and the good life is composed of a simple home ("parva ... casa", 40), work in the fields and a loving family (41-42) and, above all, by peace ("pax", 45 (bis), 47, 49) and the only permissible wars are the wars of love ("Amor", 57). Tibullus's vision of the Golden Age is also characterized by simple rural joys and the total absence of ships, trading profits ("compendia" 1.3.39), agriculture, property and war, while his picture of the Elysian fields of the Underworld is of a paradise devoted to love ("amor" 64).

"Amor" is also the chief ingredient in Tibullus's vision of the earthly good life with Delia in poem 1.2. Here again it is accompanied by a life of rustic toil and austerity (1.2.70-74) and a firm rejection of "praedas ... et arma" (1.2.66). Similarly in his blue-

print for bliss with Nemesis (2.3) Tibullus with more than a touch of irony plans for himself a life spent working strenuously ("fortiter", 5) in the fields and pursuing "amor" (32) and "venus" (35). With sly humour he includes in this poem a sketch of ancient society where acorn eating (always a symbol of pristine virtue in Latin literature)<sup>5</sup> is accompanied by passionate dedication to "Amor" (71).

Tibullus agrees with Sallust and Livy in identifying foreign wealth as one of the chief causes of moral decline (2.3.36ff., 2.3.53ff., 2.4.27ff.) and greed and extravagance as major symptoms of it (1.4.57-60, 1.9.32, 2.3.51, 2.4.29). However his approach to these issues is entirely different from that of the historians. He argues that wealth leads to war and this is the reason for his rejection and hatred of "aurum" (1.10.7). War is rarely a glorious activity in the poetry of Tibullus, but appears instead as the consequence of greed for plunder ("praeda", 1.2.66, 2.3.36 etc.) and the cause of horrifying carnage (1.10 passim). The atrocities associated with war are shown as the worst symptoms of moral decline. These include "acies", "ira", "bella", "ensem", "caedes et vulnera semper", "leti mille repente viae" (1.3.47ff), "caedes hominum generi", "proelia" (1.10.3) and "bella" (1.10.7). On a lighter note in poem 2.3 Tibullus identifies similar symptoms of moral decline - "feras acies", "discordibus armis" (2.3.37),

"cruor" and "caedes mors" (2.3.38). These denunciations of the wickedness of warfare provide a startling contrast to the works of the historians, where warfare is generally presented as noble and glorious.

There are subtle but important differences also in Tibullus's treatment of the virtues and vices of private morality. Occasionally he shows genuine sympathy for traditional moral ideals. Thus he urges Delia to be "casta" (1.3.83, 1.6.75) and pictures her working in wool with an old woman as guardian of her "sancti ... pudoris" (1.3.83). Similarly in poem 2.2 he shows a high regard for the "uxoris fidos ... amores" (2.2.11) of Cornutus's wife and for simplicity of lifestyle and indifference to wealth (2.2.13-16). There is ample evidence also to show his respect for traditional religious rites (1.1.11ff, 1.3.33-34, 1.10.15ff, 2.1.2, 2.2.3) and for the affectionate ties of family and household (1.3.5ff; 1.5.25-6ff, 1.6.63-66, 1.7.55-56, 1.10.24, 1.10.39, 2.1.23-24, 2.2.11-12, 2.5.93-94, 2.5.119-120, 2.6.29ff.). However his usual treatment of the vocabulary of private morality is wholly farcical. Tibullus and the other characters in his poetry are a bad lot who see "pudor" as a quality that makes young boys attractive (1.4.14) and "inertia" as a reprehensible lack of enterprise in pursuing a love affair (1.2.23). They glory in their own laziness ("inertia" 1.1.5, 1.1.58), skill to deceive ("fallere" 1.2.15, 1.2.53, 1.8.56), perjury ("periuria" 1.4.21), venality in love

(1.4.57-60), luxury ("luxuria" 2.3.51) and greed ("avaritia" 2.4.29). Although these qualities are ostensibly deplored as signs of moral decline, they appear in contexts where they are extremely humorous.

An examination of the moral terminology associated with the public career reveals even more clearly that Tibullus was staging an exuberant rebellion against the aristocratic moral ideal. Although there are a few sops to aristocratic sentiment in his respectful treatment of Messalla and his family (he praises the "honos" (1.7.9) and "gloria" (2.1.33-34) of Messalla and prays that Apollo will sing the "laudes ... pias" (2.5.4) of Messalinus and that he himself may one day celebrate the "pia ... spectacula" 2.5.119 of Messalla applauding his son's triumph) his usual approach to the public career is either humorous or critical. Much of the humour takes the form of parody, with the moral terminology of the public career transposed to the world of love. Thus Tibullus makes extensive use of the motif of "the lover as a soldier", lacing his work with military terminology and echoes of more serious writers.<sup>6</sup> There are numerous references to the camp, standards and weapons of Love ("proelia" of love, 1.3.64, "bella" of love, 1.10.53, "arcus" and "sagittae" of Cupid, 2.1.69, 2.1.80, 2.6.105) to the lover as a soldier of Cupid (1.1.75, 1.3.63-64) and to the pursuit of "gloria" in very un-aristocratic fields (Cupid or Amor finds "gloria" in torturing (1.3.49) and

tricking (1.6.3) lovers, Tibullus seeks "gloria" in his role as "magister amoris" (1.4.77) and he recalls his proud boast that he could do without Delia as "gloria fortis" (1.5.2) ). There is elaborate use of military terminology in his *paraclausithyron* (1.2), where the lovers are bedevilled by faults usually associated with soldiers. Tibullus exhorts Delia to remember that "fortes adiuvat ipsa Venus" (1.2.16) and counsels her against "inertia" (1.2.23) and "timor" (1.2.24) and pronounces his own readiness to endure "labor" (1.2.31) in the cause of love. The political ideals of "libertas"<sup>7</sup> and "aequitas" are also farcically treated. In 2.4.2ff. Tibullus expresses his readiness to sacrifice his "libertas ... paterna" and to auction off his household gods to gratify Nemesis and in 1.9.5-6 he says that it is "aequum" for lovers to swear falsely once.

Not all his attacks on the aristocratic ideal are humorous, however. There are also some serious poems rejecting the "divitias" (1.1.1) and "labor" (1.1.3) of the aristocratic ideal and condemning as heartless those who prefer "praedas ... et arma" (1.2.66) to love. In his most serious anti-war poem (1.10) Tibullus implicitly rejects the validity of the aristocratic ideal and argues that the man who chooses a life of peaceful obscurity is "laudandus" (1.10.39) rather than the soldier. This re-definition of aristocratic moral terminology and concepts is typical of his work.

Even a cursory examination of Tibullus's moral terminology reveals significant departures from the aristocratic ideal. Many of the vices and virtues mentioned by the historians are absent from his work ("ambitio", "cupido", "dominatio", "desidia", "ignavia", "largitio", "lascivia", "luxus", "segnitia" and "sumptus" never appear; nor do "abstinentia", "continentia", "aequitas", "concordia", "industria", "pietas", "virtus" and "probitas").<sup>8</sup> Others ("labor", "gloria", "pudor") appear chiefly in contexts where they seem absurd. And although he resembles Sallust and Livy in praising rustic austerity and worship of the gods and condemning greed and extravagance, he flouts the aristocratic tradition by identifying as the major symptom of moral decline the activity it considered a primary source of honour and glory - war.

Although Tibullus is earnest in his condemnation of war, he is often extremely frivolous in his handling of other aspects of the subject of moral decline. By contrast his successor Propertius is nearly always serious in his use of moral vocabulary to describe the ideal society, the causes and symptoms of moral decline, private morality and (to a lesser extent) the public career. Propertius's visions of the ideal society centre around faithful love. Typically this is associated with a simple, often rustic, existence where wealth is unknown. Thus in 2.9.18, reproaching Cynthia for her infidelity, he pictures wist-

fully the society of early Greece, characterized by "felix ... pudor". Similarly in 2.16.19ff. he utters the fervent wish that Rome were a simple rustic community marked by chastity and austerity and untouched by venality in love :

"atque utinam Romae nemo esset dives, et ipse  
straminea posset dux habitare casa!  
numquam venales essent ad munus amicae  
atque una fieret cana puella domo".

And in 3.13.20 Propertius praises the "pudor" of the Indian wives who practise suttee, commending them as "pia turba" (18). Later in the same poem there is an idyllic picture of early times when faithful lovers gave only such gifts as fruit and flowers (3.13.25-26) :

"felix agrestum quondam pacata inventus,  
divitiae quorum messis et arbor erant!"

Love and peace and simplicity are the keynotes also of the ideal life in poem 3.5, which opens with the ringing declaration (3.5.1) :

"Pacis Amor deus est, pacem veneramur amantes"

and proceeds with the rejection of "aurum" (3.5.3), "gemma" (3.5.4) and Campanian land (3.5.5). Elsewhere Propertius also rejects the charms of wealth (1.14.1 ff, 3.13.25) and urges the advantages of a simple rural life devoted to ploughing and worship (3.7.43ff).



Like Tibullus and the historians Propertius sees wealth as the primary cause of moral decline. Thus in 3.7.1 he exclaims "ergo sollicitae tu causa, pecunia, vitae!" and goes on to show how Paetus's greed has caused his death. The private moral downfall of Cynthia (manifested in infidelity) is caused by the tempting gifts of other lovers, including "vestes ... smaragdos ... chrysolithos" (2.16.43ff) and the opportunities for sin offered by the Roman environment. The most dangerous places are the "ludi"<sup>9</sup> and "fana", for Propertius comments approvingly on her trip to the country (2.19.9-10) :

"illic te nulli poterunt corrumpere ludi,  
fanaque peccatis plurima causa tuis".

Fashionable holiday resorts also appear as corrupting influences and although Propertius claims in 1.1.5 that Cynthia "me docuit castas odisse puellas", he nevertheless displays considerable hostility towards the town of Baiae because of its (1.11.29) :

"litora quae fuerunt castis inimica puellis".

He also complains about the erotic pictures to be found in homes, claiming that they corrupt young girls (2.6.27-30):

"quae manus obscenas depinxit prima tabellas  
et posuit casta turpia visa domo,  
illa puellarum ingenuos corrumpit ocellos,  
nequitiaeque suae noluit esse rudis".

On a larger scale he attributes the general moral decline in contemporary Rome (also manifested in the greed and unchastity of women) to the pernicious effects of foreign wealth, stating firmly that (3.13.3-4) :

"certa quidem tantis causa et manifesta ruinis:  
luxuriae nimium libera facta via est."

and later adding that (3.13.60) :

"frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis".

The symptoms of moral decline are numerous. In poem 3.13 the effect of the influx of foreign wealth is to destroy many of the traditional virtues and institutions of Rome. Worship of the gods, "pietas", "fides", "iura", "lex" and "pudor" are the primary casualties. Propertius states bitterly that (3.13.47-50) :

"at nunc desertis cessant sacraria lucis:  
aurum omnes victa iam pietate colunt.  
auro pulsa fides, auro venalia iura,  
aurum lex sequitur, mox sine lege pudor".

Neglect of the gods ("desertos ... deos", 2.6.36) also appears as a major symptom of moral decline in poem 2.6, where it is accompanied by the collapse of chastity. Propertius comments sarcastically on the irony of the erection of a temple to "Pudicitia" by Roman women (2.5.25) and the wanton Cynthia appears as a typical product of her age. Elsewhere Propertius delivers some edifying lectures to Cynthia on the value of "pudicitia",

urging her to stop wearing make-up and provocative clothes and to imitate the heroines of old (1.2.24) :

"illis ampla satis forma pudicitia".

Similarly in 1.15.22 he presents her with a list of admirable women to emulate, including Evadne, "Argivae fama pudicitiae". Usually greed and loss of chastity as symptoms of moral decline are associated with Cynthia. Thus in 2.9.20 she is attacked as "impia" for her lack of "pudor" and reproached for her deceits ("fraudes", 2.9.31) and in 2.16.15 she is criticized for succumbing to the temptation of "munera". Sometimes, however, Propertius makes comments which suggest that the moral blight of venality in love is extremely widespread. Thus in 2.32.43-44 he remarks of contemporary Rome :

"qui quaerit Tatios veteres durosque Sabinos,  
hic posuit nostra nuper in urbe pedem".

and he goes on to lament that it is impossible "lectum servare pudicum" (2.32.55). Once again the loss of chastity is brought about by gifts (2.32.42). Similarly in poem 3.12 he warns Postumus that "luxuria" is so widespread in Rome that it is difficult for any girl to remain chaste, although Galla will succeed (3.12.17-19) :

"quid faciet nullo munita puella timore,  
cum sit luxuriae Roma magistra suae?  
sed securus eas : Gallam non munera vincent."

Like Tibullus, Propertius presents an ideal society

of love and peace which is very different from the ideal society of the historians. However in some respects his choice of moral vocabulary shows sympathy for the traditional aristocratic moral code, especially in his handling of moral decline in the sphere of private morality.

Although he himself makes some attempt to display the "vitium" and "nequitia" expected of the lovers ("vitium" 2.22a.17, "nequitia" 1.6.26), he frequently shows his approval of the major virtues prescribed by the aristocratic moral code for women. Indeed he ends his work with the portrait of Cornelia, who was the embodiment of the traditional feminine virtues.<sup>10</sup> However his acceptance of the aristocratic moral code and the traditional view of moral decline is not absolute. Although he agrees with Sallust and Livy in seriously condemning the greed, extravagance and promiscuity of women in contemporary Rome, he differs very significantly from them in his handling of the moral terminology associated with the public career.

In Rome the public career was traditionally viewed with awe and respect, while love was considered a shameful or frivolous activity. Propertius repeatedly challenges the validity of the aristocratic ideal of service to the state through the public career (1.6.29, 2.7.13, 3.8.17-20) and postulates as a serious alternative a life devoted to love (2.14.23-24, 2.15.41ff). Although he sometimes shows respect for the public career, he frequently questions its value and importance. He does this chiefly by transposing

the weighty moral terminology of the public career to the arena of love. Sometimes this makes the public career seem empty and insignificant. At other times it raises love to a lofty position. Among the moral terms often transposed in this way into the sphere of love and private morality are "concordia", "gravitas", "labor", "fides", "pietas", "virtus" and "gloria". It may be instructive to examine Propertius's handling of these terms.

"Concordia" appears only once and is applied to the peace made after a quarrel between Propertius and Cynthia (3.6.41-42) :

"quod mihi si e tanto felix concordia bello  
exstiterit, per me, Lygdame liber eris".

The word "gravitas" is also used in a personal sense to describe the depth of Propertius's feeling for Cynthia. He urges her (2.20.14) :

"tu modo ne dubita de gravitate mea".

The word "labor" twice appears in a serious political sense describing the effort involved in warfare - once in reference to the capture of Veii in early times (4.10.24) and once in reference to Propertius's feelings while watching a triumph (3.4.21-22) :

"praeda sit haec illis, quorum meruere labores :  
me sat erit Sacra plaudere posse Via".

Elsewhere however it is used humorously to describe the

exertion required of lovers to satisfy their mistresses' whims, whether sexual or otherwise (1.6.23, 2.24b.29, 2.20.32, 2.22a.22, 2.23.7, 4.1.139).

The concept of "fides" had been transposed from the political field to the private world of love poetry by Catullus, a generation before Propertius began to write.<sup>11</sup> Its use in the works of Propertius is entirely serious. It appears twice in direct connection with the safety of the state - once to describe the treachery of Tarpeia (4.4.87) :

"prodiderat portaeque fidem patriamque iacentem".

and once in Propertius's description of the battle of Actium when he suggests that Augustus owed his victory to the "fides" of Apollo (4.6.57). There is a third occurrence of the word in the sphere of public morality in Propertius's compliment to Maecenas, predicting that the latter will become a symbol of "fides" (3.9.34) :

"Maecenatis erunt vera tropaea fides".

Boucher comments on this : "La fides est le mérite essentiel et la gloire de Mécène, ami et soutien d'Auguste. Le lien humain de l'amitié devient une vertu politique".<sup>12</sup>

Normally, however, it is a private rather than a political virtue in the work of Propertius, appearing most often in the context of his relationship with Cynthia. His

attitude to "fides" is summed up in his statement in 2.26b.27 : "multum in amore fides, multum constantia prodest". It is clear from the contexts in which he uses the word that he considered "fides" in a love relationship to be a bond involving trust, a sense of duty and mutual consideration. The gravity of the concept is shown by the fact that he persuades Cynthia to swear a sacred pact of "fides" with him (3.20.24)<sup>13</sup> and assures her that "fides" will bind them together even in death (2.20.17-18). He frequently boasts of his own "fides" towards her (1.12.7-8, 2.20.4, 2.20.34) and warns Bassus not to try and break the bond of "fides" between them (1.4.16). He also shows genuine admiration for the quality when it appears in the two virtuous wives Aelia Galla (3.12.38) and Arethusa, who reproaches her husband for his lack of "marita fides" (4.3.11). On a lighter note Propertius introduces the typical bawd of love elegy who gives her protégée the outrageous advice (4.5.27-28) :

"sperne fidem, provolve deos, mendacia vincant,  
frange et damnosae iura pudicitiae!"

"Pietas" occurs only three times but on two of these occasions its use reflects considerable sympathy with the aristocratic moral ideal. The disappearance of "pietas" as a symptom of moral decline has already been noted<sup>14</sup> and Propertius further demonstrates his respect for this quality in his patriotic comment on the Romans in 3.22.21 :

"nam quantum ferro tantum pietate potentes stamus".

The adjective "pius" occurs several times both in the Roman "aetia" and the love poems. The quality is seriously treated in the "aetia" and this gravity of tone is carried over into the love poems where it appears. Thus in 4.1.57 he says he will tell of early Rome "pio versu" and in 4.1.44 he describes how Aeneas carried Anchises on "umeros pios". In 3.18.31 he pictures the dead Marcellus as one of the "pias hominum ... umbras" in the underworld. The adjective is also used by Propertius to describe the attitudes of wives to their husbands (3.13.18, 3.13.24), of a mother to her son (3.7.9) and of men to the gods (3.3.10). He invests his relationship with Cynthia with the same serious undertones by referring to the "pios annos" that they have spent together (2.9.47). Cynthia also appears to him in "pia somnia" (4.7.88) after her death.

Propertius's treatment of the traditional virtues occasionally includes fulsome flattery of the Imperial family.<sup>15</sup> Thus in 2.16.41 he comments on Augustus's victory at the Battle of Actium : "Caesaris haec virtus et gloria Caesaris haec est". However there are sometimes discordant undertones in his handling of the primary aristocratic virtue of "virtus". In his compliment to the dead Marcellus in 3.18.11-12 he hints at the futility of "virtus" :

"quid genus aut virtus aut optima profuit illi  
mater, et amplexum Caesaris esse focos?"



And although he praises the military exploits of the early Romans, hailing Romulus as "urbis virtutisque parens" (4.10.17), he also presents vividly the disadvantages of excessive "virtus" in poem 3.12, where Galla expresses her fears for her husband (3.12.10-13) :

" haec tua ne virtus fiat amara tibi,  
neve tua Medae laetentur caede sagittae,  
ferreus armato neu cataphractus equo,  
neve aliquid de te flendum referatur in urna".

And on one occasion, with a flippancy that is almost Ovidian, Propertius even offers to sing the "virtus" of Bacchus, if the god will set him free from his love for Cynthia (3.17.20).

Propertius's attitude to "gloria"<sup>16</sup> is thoroughly traditional in one sense, since he tacitly assumes that it is the natural aim of a person to attain it. (This can be inferred from 4.10.3 and 3.9.9ff). However he emphatically asserts his own preference for the "gloria" of love and poetry rather than the "gloria" of war. Sometimes he is conciliatory in pressing this view and takes pains to point out that "gloria" may take many different forms. Thus in a polite poem of "recusatio", Propertius points out that (3.9.7) :

"omnia non pariter rerum sunt omnibus apta"

and that each man finds "gloria" in the field which suits him best. Propertius seeks it in writing poetry both on

national themes (4.10.3) and on love (2.12.22). His love poetry also lends "gloria" to Cynthia (2.12.22). However Propertius is not always so considerate of aristocratic sentiment in his treatment of the subject of "gloria". In 2.3.29, he pays Cynthia the outrageous compliment :

"gloria Romanis una es tu nata puellis".

And in poem 2.7 he expresses his rejection of the public career as a source of "gloria" very forcefully indeed, exclaiming (2.7.14-18) :

" nullus de nostro sanguine miles erit  
quod si vera meae comitarem castra puellae,  
non mihi sat magnus Castoris iret equus.  
hinc etenim tantum meruit mea gloria nomen,  
gloria ad hibernos lata Borysthenidas."

His lukewarm attitude to military "gloria" is further apparent in poems 4.3 and 3.12. In 4.3.63 Arethusa begs her husband not to consider the "gloria" of storming Bactra adequate compensation for their separation. And in 3.12.3 Propertius reproaches Postumus for the excessive craving for "gloria" which will take him away from his wife, Galla.

Like Tibullus, Propertius makes significant alterations to the traditional aristocratic picture of moral decline. To some extent the moral qualities which he chooses for approval or censure reflect genuine sympathy with the aristocratic moral ideal. Thus he applauds

chastity in women and simplicity of lifestyle and deplores as symptoms of contemporary decadence the promiscuity and extravagance which he attributes to the influx of foreign wealth into Rome. However there are other aspects of the aristocratic tradition on moral decline which he vigorously rejects. Unlike the historians he does not present hardihood in war as a characteristic of the ideal society, nor does he see reluctance to go to war as a symptom of moral decline. On the contrary such reluctance is shown as praiseworthy and humane (2.15.43, 3.12.5). He pointedly ignores most of the vices identified by the historians as symptoms of moral decline<sup>17</sup> ("ambitio", "avaritia", "largitio", "licentia", "superbia", "crudelitas", "dominatio", "socordia", "ignavia", "inertia" and "señitias" never appear; "cupido" appears only once (1.1.2, where it signifies sexual desire, but has no moral connotations); "otium" has a single, insignificant appearance (4.4.79); "libido" occurs four times and is mildly censured (2.16.14, 2.32.33, 3.19.1, 3.20.23); "nequitia" and "vitium" both make brief appearances, but are presented rather as an attractive way of life than as reprehensible qualities ("nequitia", 1.6.26; "vitium", 2.22a.17) ) and he transfers many of the terms for virtues associated with the public career to the private world of love. This transfer of moral terminology involves a significant re-shaping of the traditional picture of moral decline.

An even more startling transformation of the aristocratic tradition takes place in the works of the last love

elegist, Cvid. His love poetry contains a lavish and systematic burlesque of all the major aspects of the aristocratic moral tradition, including the treatment of the ideal society, the causes and symptoms of moral decline, private morality and the public career. The joke is sustained throughout the Amores, Medicamina Faciei, Ars amatoria, and Remedia Amoris and can be best appreciated through a study of the moral terminology used in these works. Some reference will also be made to his works in other genres since these often shed light on his usage of moral terminology in his love poetry.

The traditional aristocratic version of the ideal society is set in the past, usually in early Rome, while contemporary Rome is seen as a hotbed of decadence. However Ovid upsets this tradition by setting his ideal society firmly in contemporary Rome and endowing it with many of the qualities seen by the historians as symptoms of moral decline. In A.A. 3.113ff he emphatically rejects the sentiment of nostalgia for the past and outlines his reasons for preferring modern times. He contrasts the "simplicitas rudis" (A.A. 3.113) of early Rome with the splendour of his own day, but adds that he prefers modern Roman society not because of luxury (A.A. 3.127-128) :

"sed quia cultus adest, nec nostros mansit in annos  
rusticitas, priscis illa superstes avis".

This contrast between "rusticitas" and "cultus" is a recurrent motif in his love poetry.

On the occasions when he does describe early Roman society he emphasizes its "rusticitas" for humorous effect and derides its traditional morality as "rusticus". Thus in Am. 1.8.39-40 the bawd comments scornfully on the Sabine women of old :

"forsitan immundae Tatio regnante Sabinae  
noluerint habiles pluribus esse viris".

but continues cynically (Am. 1.8.43-44)

" ... casta est, quam nemo rogavit -  
aut, si rusticitas non vetat, ipsa rogat".

Similarly chastity, rusticity and absurdity all go together, in Am. 3.4.37ff, where Ovid deplores the naivete of some people :

"rusticus est nimium, quem laedit adultera coniunx,  
et notos mores non satis urbis habet".

Ovid also draws a vivid contrast between ancient austerity and modern "cultus" in M.F. 11ff and gives some interesting advice on attaining "cultus". Significantly it is associated with "inaurata ... veste" (18), "gemmis" (20) and "lapides oriente" (21), all standard trappings of moral decadence incarnate in the works of the historians. Ovid mouths a few conventional sentiments in his treatment of the past in the love poetry (thus in Am. 2.11.1-2 he deplores the "malas ... vias" of ships, in 3.8.35ff he gives a traditional sketch of the virtues of the Saturnian age and in A.A. 1.242 he seems to imply approval of the

"simplicitas" of earlier times), but in general he approaches the subject with exuberant humour.

The same is true of his treatment of the causes and symptoms of moral decline. He agrees with the aristocratic tradition in identifying "aurum" (Am. 3.8.29), "ludi" and "theatra" as causes of moral decline, but humorously distorts the traditional view of these things by recommending them to his disciples as useful aids in bringing about corruption. This in A.A. 1.100 Ovid recommends the theatres as hunting grounds for lovers, because :

"ille locus casti damna pudoris habet".

and in A.A. 1.355 he implies that the lover's aim is to corrupt. In A.A. 3.633ff he seeks to make the achievement of this aim easier by offering a helpful checklist of corrupting influences which make the task of a guardian impossible. These include theatres, religious ceremonies, the temple of the Bona Diva, the baths, co-operative friends, skeleton keys, wine and bribes. In the R.A. "otia" (136),<sup>18</sup> "divitiis" (746) and "theatris" (751) all serve to foster passion.

Ovid identifies several familiar symptoms of moral decline - nearly all of them associated with deception and venality in love. Thus in Am. 1.10.11 he complains of the girl's demand for "munera", in Am. 3.3.11 of her readiness to swear falsely ("falsum iurare") in Am. 3.8 of her greed

(reproaching her as "avara", Am. 3.8.22) and in Am. 3.11 of her perjury ("periuratos ... deos", Am. 3.11.22), infidelity (Am. 3.11.13) and wicked ways ("mores ... malos", Am. 3.11.42). In A.A. 2.277 he comments with wry humour on the greed of the age in which both honour and love are up for sale :

"aurea sunt vere nunc saecula : plurimus auro  
venit honos : auro conciliatur amor".

In the love poetry Ovid's treatment of the moral qualities associated with the traditional aristocratic view of moral decline shows an anarchic sense of humour. Both virtues and vices appear in contexts which render them wholly absurd and their meanings are often deliberately distorted. The nature and extent of this distortion can best be seen by examining his treatment of some specific virtues and vices.

"Pudor" is one of the traditional virtues which receives witty and cynical treatment in Ovid's love poetry. He claims to find it a sexually attractive quality (Am. 2.4.12) :

"... et insidiae sunt pudor ille meae",  
but also recommends it as a suitable mask to hide a salacious life (Am. 3.14.27-28) :

"indue cum tunicis metuentem crimina vultum,  
et pudor obscenum diffiteatur opus".

The market value of "pudor" is keenly appreciated by the

bawd Dipsas, who advises her pupil (Am. 1.8.35-36) :

"decet alba quidem pudor ora, sed iste  
si simules prodest; verus obesse solet".

And in Am. 1.2.32, in a gleeful burlesque of a solemn Roman triumph, Ovid plans a triumph in which "Mens Bona", "Pudor" and any other enemies of love shall be led along as captives. He frequently counsels young lovers against excessive "pudor" (A.A. 1.496, 2.251, 2.270) and urges young men to go to the theatre in search of women, since that place is fatal to "pudor" (A.A. 1.100). There is a Vergilian echo in his advice to the lover in A.A. 1.607-8 to dispense with "pudor" :

" ... fuge rustice longe  
hinc pudor; audentem Forsque Venusque iuvat".

Several of the classic virtues associated with the public career receive the same facetious treatment. In A.A. 2.675 Ovid assures his young acolytes that older women are often more desirable than young women, since they have greater "prudencia" in the art of love. The virtue of "fides" is also treated in a spirit of burlesque. Thus in Am. 1.3.6ff when Ovid lists his qualifications as a lover he includes among them his "pura fides" along with a string of other fine qualities (Am. 1.3.13-14) :

"et nulli cessura fides, sine crimine mores  
nudaque simplicitas purpureusque pudor".

Similarly in A.A. 3.544, after detailing the amorous merits



of poets ("chorus ... aptus amare", A.A. 3.534), he stresses their "fides" in love :

"et nimium certa scimus amare fide".

And in Am. 1.10.57 he says that the poor man's offerings in love are "officium ... studiumque fidemque". But the "fides" of Ovid's love poetry is a very lighthearted concept indeed, as Am. 2.8.18 shows. Ovid compliments himself on the poise with which he had lied to his mistress about his infidelity (Am. 2.8.17-18) :

"at quanto, si forte refers, praesentior ipse  
per Veneris feci numina magna fidem!"

Corinna too breaks her "fides", but is never punished by the gods (Am. 3.3.1). Nevertheless "fides" should be kept, Ovid urges - except with women (A.A. 1.644). In A.A. 1.739-740 he goes on to demand with weary humour :

"conquerar, an moneam mixtum fas omne nefasque?  
nomen amicitia est, nomen inane fides!"

"Fides" is similarly handled in the Heroides, which inevitably contain numerous complaints about the lack of "fides" shown by lovers (Her. 2.26, 2.31, 2.102, 6.41, 7.8, 7.18, 7.57, 10.116), but it is far more seriously treated in the remainder of Ovid's surviving works. In the Tristia and Ex Ponto he frequently begs his friends to show their "fides" by working for his recall and aiding his interests in Rome (E.P. 1.2.146, 2.4.33, 4.10.74, 4.10.78, 4.10.82, T.5.6.8, T.5.6.18) and thanks them for the "fides"

they have already shown him (E.P. 1.9.10, 2.6.26, 2.7.61, 2.7.82, T.1.3.66, 3.4.36, 4.5.14). Ovid's picture of the Golden Age in Metamorphoses I includes a conventional mention of the "fides" of early times (M. 1.189-190) :

"aurea prima sata est aetas, quae vindice nullo  
sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat".

The motif is conventionally elaborated and Ovid marks the beginning of the Iron Age with the flight of "fides" from the earth, accompanied by "pudor verumque" (M. 1.129).

The military virtues of "labor" and "gloria" also appear in humorous contexts in the love poems, although they are quite seriously treated in the Fasti, Metamorphoses, Tristia and Ex Ponto. In F. 1.57-68 Ovid pays a graceful compliment to the "duces" of Rome, commending their "labor" in a prayer addressed to Janus :

"dexter ades ducibus, quorum secura labore  
otia terra ferax, otia pontus habet".

And in the letters from exile he frequently uses the word "labor" quite seriously to describe the work involved in literary composition (E.P. 1.5.25, 1.5.60, 3.9.20, 3.9.21, 4.14.25). However in the love poems the word<sup>is</sup> used with a riotous sense of the absurd. In A.A. 1.453, in parody of the famous line in Vergil's Aeneid 6.129, Ovid cries :  
"hoc opus, hic labor est, primo sine munere iungi".<sup>19</sup>

Elsewhere he sighs about the "labor" or "labores" required

of the lover in pursuit of women (A.A. 1.37, 2.236, 2.569) and, contemplating the magnitude of the task he has undertaken, sums it up thus ( A.A. 2.537-8) :

"ardua molimur, sed nulla, nisi ardua virtus:  
difficilis nostra poscitur arte labor".

Like Propertius he sees "gloria" as the natural motive for writing (Am. 3.12.3, T. 5.12.37, E.P. 1.5.57, 2.7.47, although in E.P. 3.9.55 he stresses that his poems in exile were written to gain not "gloria" but "utilitas officiumque") and thinks peace reflects greater "gloria" on politicians than war (F. 1.714). He also uses "gloria" as an amusing component of the motif of the lover as a soldier (Am. 2.12.12) but he far outstrips Propertius in his humorous use of the word. This is particularly evident in the mock heroic elegy on the death of the parrot (Am. 2.6), which contains a riotous parody of many of the traditional virtues. Thus after eulogizing the "concordia" and "fides" which existed between the (now deceased) parrot and the turtle dove (Am. 2.16.13-14) :

"plena fuit vobis omni concordia vita,  
et stetit ad finem longa tenaxque fides"

he goes on to hail the parrot as "avium gloria" (Am. 2.6.20) and voices the timid hope that the bird's shade will go to "volucrum locus ille piarum" (Am. 2.6.51).

A similar distortion of meaning occurs in Ovid's treatment of "virtus" in the love poetry. In the remainder

of his works it is treated seriously. In the Fasti he laments the defeat of the Fabii by a treacherous enemy in language reminiscent of Livy's (F. 2.227) : "fraude perit virtus". His treatment of the story of Lucretia also resembles Livy's and Lucretia dies with the words (F. 2.844) :

"iam satis est virtus dissimulata diu".

And in the letters from exile Ovid's concept of "virtus" is grave and exacting. He says that true "virtus" is shown in times of trouble (T. 4.3.80, E.P. 2.2.11), but is very rare (T. 5.14.29) and he argues that "virtus" should be practised for its own sake and not with the hope of reward (T. 5.14.31, E.P. 2.3.35). However in the love poetry "virtus" appears in absurd contexts. Thus Ovid assures his readers that "virtus" is necessary to keep a mistress (A.A. 2.13-14) :

"arte mea capta est, arte tenenda mea est

nec minor est virtus, quam quaerere, parta tueri".

and later braces himself to show the "ardua virtus" (A.A. 2.537) necessary to complete his didactic task.

"Pietas" is a virtue which Ovid evidently valued highly. In the Metamorphoses he presents the overthrow of "pietas" as one of the major symptoms of moral decline, commenting that in the last stage of the Iron Age "victa iacet pietas" (M. 1.149). Similarly in the Tristia and Ex Ponto Ovid shows his high regard for this quality by making frequent and grateful reference to the "pietas"

shown by his friends (E.P. 1.7.59, 1.9.27, 2.6.31, 3.2.7, 4.8.8, 4.8.38, 4.12.41; T. 1.5.14, 1.7.11, 1.9.35, 3.4.35). And in the Fasti he talks respectfully of the "pietas" due to the "manes" (F. 2.535) and the "pietas" of two of Rome's legendary heroes, Aeneas (F. 2.543, 4.37, 4.799) and Romulus (F. 3.78, 4.850, 5.471). Aeneas's "pietas" is also praised in the Metamorphoses (M. 14.109, 14.443). Even in the love poetry "pietas" is never really parodied as the other virtues are. Ovid advises the lover to show "amor" and "pietas" (A.A. 2.321) when the girl is sick (admittedly with the hope of reward when she recovers) and earlier in the same work gives young men the advice "pietas sua foedera servet" (A.A. 1.641). Yet Ovid's approach to moral qualities is often less serious in the love poetry than in his other works and even the virtue of "pietas" does not entirely escape mockery. "Plus Aeneas", who is so resoundingly praised in the Fasti and Metamorphoses, is denounced as the archetypal deceitful male in the Ars amatoria and has his "pietas" strongly impugned (A.A. 3.39).

The extent to which Ovid makes fun of moral qualities in the love poetry can be best appreciated by glancing at his very different treatment of these qualities in his other works. This also gives a clue to the degree of influence exerted by the genre on Ovid's handling of moral vocabulary. Significantly the humorous treatment of virtues like "pietas", "virtus" and "fides" in the love

poetry gives place in the Tristia and Ex Ponto to an earnest regard for their value. This is reflected particularly in Ovid's letters to his wife, which are full of praise for her "pietas" (T. 5.5.59, 4.382, 1.3.86), "virtus" and "virtutes" (T. 1.6.15, 4.3.73, 4.3.76, 5.14.24; E.P. 3.1.63, 3.1.94), "pudicitia", "probitas" and "fides" (T. 5.5.45). The letters from exile also contain some lavish flattery of Augustus and his family. Ovid extols the "clementia" (E.P. 1.2.61, 2.2.119, 3.6.7; E. 2.125, 4.4.53, 4.3.39, 5.4.19), "virtus" (E.P. 4.13.27) and "virtutes" (E.P. 2.3.23) of Augustus, the "virtus" of Julius Caesar (E.P. 4.8.63), Germanicus (E.P. 2.1.54), and Tiberius (E.P. 2.3.31) and the "virtus" and "pudicitia" of Livia (E.P. 3.1.115-116). While the praise of Augustus and his family can be explained largely as a sycophantic effort to win a recall from exile (or at least a lighter punishment), the letters to Ovid's wife must be taken seriously. It is reasonable to assume that they are sincere since they are private documents in which Ovid is speaking in his own right and not in the "persona" of the lover. This suggests that the moral iconoclasm of his earlier poetry is a pose adopted as a humorous device and considered suitable to the genre of love elegy.

In his treatment of vices in the love poetry Ovid shows the same anarchic humour as in his treatment of virtues. Apart from his humorous intentions, another factor may also have influenced his choice and usage of moral vocabulary here. This is his personal distaste for

the public career (expressed in F. 1.299-304, T. 4.10.38, F. 1.303, 2.661, A.A. 3.451). Many of the political vices (such as "ambitio" and "superbia") occur very seldom in his works, while others are used for humorous effect. Thus Ovid takes pride in his own "nequitia" (Am. 2.1.2), is fascinated by "libido" (A.A. 1.281, 1.341), expresses light-hearted approval for "lascivia" (Am. 1.4.21, 3.14.19, R.A. 385) and claims to possess most of the lazy vices identified by Sallust as symptoms of moral decline. In Am. 3.8.25 lovers are called "nos ... inertes" and in A.A. 2.229 this languid pose is varied by the use of the contradictory conceit of protesting that "Amor" and "inertia" are mutually incompatible : "Amor odit inertes". A similar sentiment is expressed in Am. 2.10.19, where he complains that :

"at mihi saevus amor somnos abrumpat inertes"

Any time not spent in love is classed as "tempus iners" (A.A. 3.60, Her. 16.160, 314, 18.110) and to be deprecated. In R.A. 779-780 Ovid argues that Agamemnon would certainly not have left Briseis untouched, for :

" .... Atrides,  
quod si non faceret, turpiter esset iners".

"Desidia" is treated in the same contradictory fashion. In R.A. 149 Ovid says :

"Desidiam puer ille sequi solet, odit agentes"

but in Am. 1.9.31 he demands inconsistently :

"Ergo desidiam quicumque vocabat amorem, desinat".

Similarly in Am. 1.9.43 he says that he used to be "ignavus", but love of a beautiful girl has changed him, but in Am. 2.18.3 love and "ignavia" go together, for while Macer is writing *epid* Ovid says :

"nos ... ignava Veneris cessamus in umbra".

However in A.A. 2.233 he warns the "segnes" away from love.

Although his use of moral terminology is conventional in his other works, in the love poetry Ovid turns the moral vocabulary and concepts of the aristocratic tradition inside out. He agrees with the historians in seeing early Rome as a simple rustic community of hardy warriors and modest wives, but shudders at the prospect of living in such a society. Like Sallust and Livy he identifies foreign wealth as a cause of moral decline and presents contemporary Rome as the centre of a society devoted to witty and sophisticated amusements, carnal pleasure and the avoidance of hard work. Unlike them he glories in it. If any form of moral decline is taking place in Rome Ovid is clearly determined to take enthusiastic part in it.

It can be seen from this brief survey of their vocabulary that the love elegists differ significantly from the historians in their usage of moral terminology. This difference appears in two main forms. Firstly there is an almost complete omission in love elegy of most of



the terms for political virtues and vices (such as "aequitas", "abstinentia", "continentia", "industria", "dominatio" and "largitio") and a very sparing use of others (such as "ambitio", "avaritia", "libido" and "concordia"). Nor can this be explained purely by the metrical demands of elegy, since careful searching fails to reveal equivalent words or periphrases for most of the terms such as "abstinentia", "continentia", "dominatio" and "largitio" which are inadmissible in elegiac metre. Even when there are equivalents, as in the case of "industria" (which is approximated in meaning by "labor") or "aequitas" (where the adjective "aequus" can be used), the elegists still do not show the historians' serious approach to these qualities. Secondly many of the moral terms familiar from historiography are used in a completely different way by the elegists. Thus words like "fides", "concordia", "virtus", "labor" and "gloria", which are associated in historiography with the aristocratic ideal of the public career, are used almost exclusively in elegy to describe private not public matters. In part this can be explained as a legitimate variation in the usage of words which had a wide range of meanings and applications in real life. However there are also occasions when the elegists are unquestionably indulging in deliberate parody of the historians' use of these words. Moreover the elegists frequently adopt unexpected attitudes to moral qualities, completely reversing traditional standards. Thus, far from condemning qualities like "ignavia", "desidia", "inertia" and

"nequitia", traditionally denounced as symptoms of moral decline, they take pride in possessing them. And even on the rare occasions when they treat the subject of moral decline seriously, they usually present it in terms of private not public morality, unlike the historians.

Thus it is clear from their usage of moral terminology that the elegists significantly re-shape the traditional treatment of the aristocratic ideal and the subject of moral decline. This can now be seen in more detail by examining their treatment of the ideal society and the past.

## CHAPTER THREE

## The ideal society and the past

In the aristocratic tradition the distant past of Rome and the ideal society are virtually synonymous and both are the subject of intense admiration, but this is not always true of love elegy. Sometimes the love elegists treat the past in a spirit of mockery and sometimes they set their visions of the ideal society in contemporary times. It will therefore be necessary to consider their treatment of both the past and the ideal society even when the two diverge in their works, since both are important in their handling of moral decline.

Tibullus's treatment of the past and the ideal society ranges from broad farce to wistful reverence. In two of his poems (1.4 and 2.3) robust humour dominates. In poem 1.4 Tibullus indulges in a witty satire of the laments for ancient vanished virtues typically uttered by earnest moralists and politicians. This satire takes the form of an apparently pious complaint about contemporary greed (1.4.57-58) :

"heu male nunc artes miseras haec saecula tractant:

iam tener adsuevit munera velle puer."

However a closer examination reveals that the speaker is the lecherous, disreputable garden god, Priapus, who is delivering a sermon on the art of ensnaring young boys. He implies

that in the past they were more compliant to the homosexuals who pursued them - a sentiment which is clearly an outrageous perversion of traditional nostalgia for the past.

A similar distortion of traditional visions of the past occurs in poem 2.3, where Tibullus presents a humorous picture of a past society devoted to love. He exclaims (2.3.29-32) :

"felices olim, Veneri cum fertur aperte

servire aeternos non pudeisse deos.

fabula nunc ille est: sed cui sua cura puella est,

fabula sit mavult quam sine amore deus."

As in poem 1.4, this is a very different picture of the "felicitas" of the past from that promoted by the historians. Indeed it contains a firm rejection of the aristocratic moral ideal in Tibullus's refusal to concern himself with "fabula". But an even more startling vision of the past is to follow, for after first condemning and then capitulating to the wickedness of his own times, Tibullus continues (2.367-74) :

"o valeant fruges, ne sint modo rure puellae;

glans alat et prisco more bibantur aquae.

glans aluit veteres et passim semper amarunt;

quid nocuit sulcos non habuisse satos?

tunc quibus aspirabat Amor, praebebat aperte

mitis in umbrosa gaudia valle Venus.

nullus erat custos, nulla exclusura dolentes

ianua. si fas est, mos precor ille redi."

In this passage Tibullus visualizes the past as a Golden Age<sup>1</sup> paradise for lovers, which is a startling departure from the aristocratic tradition. An austere outdoor life of acorn eating is normally associated in Latin literature with either savagery (Lucretius, De Rerum Natura, 5.962) or superlative moral worth (Vergil, Georgics, 1.8 and 1.159), but Tibullus makes it a symbol of bliss in love. Far from demonstrating their hardihood in war, his hairy ancients (75), untrammelled by the obstacles of doors and guardians pursue passion even more vigorously than their descendants. As K. F. Smith comments :

"Tibullus grants the primitive condition, but makes it idyllic."<sup>2</sup>

At the opposite pole is Tibullus's serious treatment of the past in poem 2.5. Written in honour of Messalinus's installation as one of the "quindecimviri sacris faciundis," this elegy contains a vivid and impressive picture of early Rome. Like the historians Tibullus presents the "aeterna urbs" (23) as a rustic hamlet destined eventually to rule the world (57-60). Yet even in this solemn poem he says little about the moral qualities of her inhabitants and to a large extent shifts the emphasis in his account of Rome from the public to the private sphere. Thus the girl on holiday visiting her shepherd lover receives four lines of description (35-38), while Romulus and Remus receive only two (23-24). And even in his account of such legendary figures as Aeneas and Ascanius (couched in the form of a prophecy by

the Sibyl) Tibullus makes no attempt to assert the moral superiority of early times. The whole poem displays a transmutation of aristocratic moral traditions. Tibullus treats early Rome respectfully, but he does not present it as a warlike village bristling with spears and asceticism and deserving profound admiration as the archetypal ideal society. Indeed Tibullus's notion of the ideal society seems rather to be captured in his picture of the Palilia festival in the same poem (87ff). It is characterized not by ferocious austerity, but by rustic worship, drunken celebrations, family affection, peace and love.

Similar pictures of an ideal society appear in poems 1.1, 1.2 and 1.5. Poem 1.1 is in many respects a "programme piece" incorporating most of the major themes of Tibullus's poetry. As Gordon Williams points out :

"There is a great complexity of thematic material here: past and present, rich and poor, ambition and content, luxury and simplicity, love and war, the proper respect due to the ancient gods." <sup>3</sup>

The kaleidoscope of themes includes a significant reshaping of the traditional model of the ideal society. Traditionally the ideal society was associated with respect for the gods, rustic austerity, feminine chastity and toil in the fields performed by men who were always ready to exchange the plough for the sword and display their military virtues. But Tibullus changes all this. Although he

retains in his contemporary Utopia the trappings of poverty (1.1.5, 19, 34, 43), rustic worship (1.1.11ff.), agricultural labour (1.1.7ff, 29ff) and pristine austerity (1.1.39-40), he vehemently rejects the most important feature of the aristocratic moral ideal - devotion to the public career (1.1.1-4, 57-58) and chooses instead a life devoted to love (1.1.57-58), traditionally a symptom of gross moral decadence. Moreover the use he makes of these standard trappings is highly significant. His fields and flocks and his earthenware goblets, modelled on those of the ancient rustics (1.1.39-40), are not substantial as Sallust's and Livy's are and they do not serve as teaching aids in a sermon on the moral superiority of ancient customs. Rather Tibullus is using the standard scenery and props of the aristocratic moral ideal as a stylised setting for the rejection of that very ideal. His transformation of the traditional version of the ideal society thus serves an important literary purpose.

In poem 1.2 the ingredients of the ideal society are very similar, although the motif has a different literary function. Once again, after emphatically rejecting war, Tibullus expresses his dream of sharing with Delia a life of bliss consisting of country toil, love and simple living (1.2.71-74) :

"ipse boves mea si tecum modo Delia possim  
iungere et in solito pascere monte pecus,  
et te dum liceat teneris retinere lacertis,  
mollis et inculta sit mihi somnus humo."

Although there are no explicit moral statements in this, it still contains a subtle reflection of the traditional version of the ideal society with some unexpected variations. Tibullus has rejected military campaigns as the product of greed and he now proceeds to arrogate to himself the virtues traditionally associated with the Roman soldier. He is hardy enough to sleep soundly on the ground (surely a parody of the sort of sentiments expressed by Sallust in B.C. 6.4-6) and he is wholly indifferent to the charms of wealth. The virtues of the traditional ideal society are thus transferred to a new setting. As a literary device this is highly effective. By laying claim to the virtues of hardihood and simplicity in such extravagant terms Tibullus makes his love affair with Delia seem like a feat of heroic endurance (which is very amusing) and he also projects a vivid sense of impending disillusion. It is clear from the generally gloomy tone of the poem that Tibullus will have little chance of realizing his ideal society. It thus appears merely as the escapist dream of a visionary, couched in terms which lend wry humour to the poem.

Similarly in 1.5.19-20 Tibullus confides :

"at mihi felicem vitam, si salva fuisses,  
fingebam, demens, et renuente deo."

and goes on to relate the details of his vision. Again these include country chores (1.5.21-24), affectionate care for the household (1.5.25-26) and worship of the rural gods (1.5.27-28). Tibullus expresses the startling ambition



"in tota me nihil esse domo" (1.5.30) and pictures Delia entertaining Messalla (1.5.31-34). With the arrival on the scene of Messalla, who elsewhere appears as the archetype of the successful soldier and statesman,<sup>4</sup> the idyll disintegrates and Tibullus is found immediately after resorting to strong drink and women (1.5.37ff). This underlines the escapist quality of Tibullus's ideal society which is so insubstantial and so far removed from the robust virtues of the forum (as embodied in Messalla) that it cannot survive the mere thought of a confrontation with these. Tibullus himself as a self-effacing weakling handing over the rule of his household to a woman is a far cry from the aggressive warriors who populate the ideal society of aristocratic tradition.

There are three remaining poems in which Tibullus seems to display serious enthusiasm for the attractions of the past, now mostly vanished - poems 1.3, 1.10 and 2.1. Poem 1.3 demonstrates dramatically the complexity of Tibullus's handling of the aristocratic moral ideal. The poet has fallen ill while abroad on military service and writes from his sickbed in Corcyra. His thoughts stray over a range of people (Messalla, the poet's mother and sister, Delia) and subjects (visions of his death, memories of his departure, prayer to the gods, the Golden Age, the afterlife in the underworld, an eager anticipation of his homecoming). Within this odd collection of subjects there is more than one change of mood and moral attitude. Although

Tibullus is clearly proud of his connection with Messalla and his own military career (he asks for a typically military epitaph (1.3.55-56) :

"HIC IACET IMMITI CONSUMPTVS MORTE TIBVLIVS,  
MESSALLAM TERRA DVM SEQVITVROVE MARI." )

he nevertheless expresses a lament for the past Golden Age when men lived peacefully (1.3.35-48)

"quam bene Saturno vivebant rege, priusquam

tellus in longas est patefacta vias!

nondum caeruleas pinus contempserat undas,

effusum ventis praebueratque sinum,

nec vagus ignotis repetens compendia terris

presserat externa navita merce ratem.

40

illo non validus subiit iuga tempore taurus,

non domito frenos ore momordit equus,

non domus ulla fores habuit, non fixus in agris,

qui regeret certis finibus arva, lapis.

ipsae mella dabant quercus, ultroque ferebant

45

obvia securis ubera lactis oves.

non acies, non ira fuit, non bella, nec ense

immiti saevus duxerat arte faber."

In contrast, he adds (1.3.49-50) :

"nunc Iove sub domino caedes et vulnera semper,

nunc mare, nunc leti mille repente viae."

Tibullus's picture of the Golden Age follows a typical pattern and does not differ greatly from the versions of Ovid (Met. 1.39-150), Vergil (Georg. 2.458-540) and Horace (Odes 4.2-39ff), but he is unusually insistent on

his condemnation of the atrocities of war. Of course this version of the Golden Age is lent added piquancy by the context in which it appears - Tibullus is close to death in a foreign country on a military campaign and thus has added reason to hate ships and wars, however proud he may be of his military record. Paul Jal attributes an even more far-reaching significance to the passage, arguing that it reflects Tibullus's reaction against the horrors of the civil war :

"L'espoir de connaître peut-être, un jour, ce pays imaginaire se fond curieusement, chez l'auteur avec la nostalgie d'un passé présenté sous les traits traditionnels de l'âge d'or dont le mythe allait précisément se développer intensément à l'époque de la guerre civile, en liaison étroite avec l'inspiration générale à la "paix civile". Les lecteurs, ne trouvaient-ils pas, dans ces tableaux idylliques des poètes, un moyen d'échapper aux horreurs du réel?" <sup>5</sup>

The passage can thus be interpreted as a strongly worded protest against the excesses caused by devotion to the military ideal. Moreover Tibullus has sandwiched the passage between two alternative visions of what may happen to him. Both of these, like his picture of the Golden Age, have a strong escapist element. They also constitute typical Tibullan notions of the ideal society. On the one hand Tibullus may recover and return home (1.3.33-34) where he will offer incense to his family "Penates" and "Lar" and presumably lead an existence very similar to the idyllic

life of the Golden Age. On the other he may die, but even if he dies he is determined to continue an after-life of the same idyllic type. Venus will lead him into the Elysian fields, which are simply a more ethereal form of the countryside, where the untilled fields bear flowers (1.3.61-62):

"fert casiam non culta seges, totosque per agros  
floret odoratis terra benigna rosis"

and bands of young men join girls in the "proelia" of love (1.3.63-64):

"ac iuvenum series teneris immixta puellis  
ludit, et adsidue proelia miscet amor."

Alive or dead, in the past or present, Tibullus can always envisage himself leading a Golden Age existence or something closely approximating to it. In this elegy, as in so many others, there are no clear barriers between past, present and future. Yet, as usual, Tibullus is emphatic in his insistence that the ideal society is marked by peace and love and that war is a wicked departure from this.

An even clearer indictment of war appears in poem 1.10. In this poem two versions of the ideal society are presented. The first is set in early times and is characterized by the absence of war, a simple pastoral existence, devout religious worship and close family ties. Tibullus denounces the wickedness of his own age which is manifested in the practice of war and utters a fervent wish that he had lived in an earlier and better age (1.10.7-12):

"divitis hoc vitium est auri, nec bella fuerunt,  
 faginus astabat cum scyphus ante dapes.  
 non arces, non vallus erat, somnumque petebat  
 securus varias dux gregis inter oves.  
 tunc mihi vita foret, vulgi nec tristia nossem  
 arma nec audissem corde micante tubam."

He then prays to his family "Lar" to save him in battle and wistfully recalls the early days when there was greater "fides" (1.10.19) and these gods were reverently worshipped with humble gifts. There is a characteristic touch of Tibullus's warm sense of family affection in his picture of the little girl with her offering of honeycomb following her father to the shrine of the god (1.10.24). This vision of an ideal society characterized by the absence of war is particularly significant when coupled with the second version of the ideal society in this poem.

This appears after another impassioned denunciation of the madness of war when Tibullus exclaims (1.10.39-40):

"quin potius laudandus hic est quem prole parata  
 occupat in parva pigra senecta casa!"

He continues with a description of the rustic toil of the old man and his family and a celebration of the blessings of peace. This is a powerful challenge to the aristocratic ideal, which had as one of its main aims the winning of "laus" through the public display of energetic military virtues. Tibullus argues that "laus" is a more fitting

reward for a life of private obscurity devoted to peaceful, slow occupations.

However Tibullus does not always issue such provocative challenges to the aristocratic tradition. In poem 2.1 he achieves a harmonious truce between his vision of the ideal society and the demands of the aristocratic moral ideal. The poem celebrates a country festival and there is a strong suggestion in its opening lines that Tibullus and his household are preserving the "mos maiorum" (2.1.1-2):

"quisquis adest, faveat : fruges lustramus et agros,  
ritus ut a prisco traditus extat avo."

Once again this rustic worship is associated with family life (in the form of the "turba ... vernarum", 2.1.23), drunken celebrations (2.1.27ff) and love (2.1.67ff.), but there is no denunciation of war in the poem. Indeed Messalla is invited to the festival and hailed for covering his ancestors with glory (2.1.33-34) :

"gentis Aquitanae celebrer Messalla triumphis  
et magna intonsis gloria victor avis."

It is not always easy to isolate Tibullus's visions of the past. As J. P. Elder points out, the world of Tibullus's poetry is "a world of mood and not of place, a world of past and present commingled, a dreamlike world of escape, located somewhere between Arcadia and the forum."<sup>6</sup> The influence of pastoral poetry<sup>7</sup> on the presentation of

this escapist world should not be underestimated, but the contribution of the Roman tradition is equally important. Tibullus is skilful and selective in his borrowing and re-shaping of the aristocratic moral tradition. Like the historians he expresses nostalgia for the past, but his treatment of the morality of early times is quite different from theirs. In his frivolous moments he applauds the past not for its moral superiority to the present, but for the greater opportunities it offered to lovers, which is a startling departure from the traditional view of early times. An equally surprising transformation of the traditional view of the past occurs in his serious poems, where he applauds the society of early times not for its military virtues, but for its peaceful qualities.

The pictures of the ideal society which Tibullus presents are consistent with this outlook and display the same devotion to peace. The ideal society as envisaged by Tibullus is usually characterized by a life of rustic simplicity, worship of the gods, close family ties, love and peace. Many of these features (particularly the emphasis on worship and austerity) seem to have been borrowed from the traditional picture of the ideal society of the past. Indeed Tibullus seems to view himself as a preserver of the "mos maiorum", for he shows a strong sense of kinship and continuity with the men of early times (1.1.37-40, 2.1.1-2). However in many of the poems dealing with the past or the ideal society Tibullus offers a serious challenge to the aristocratic moral ideal by arguing that

peace and obscurity are better than war or fame.

The poems in which Propertius treats the past fall into two main categories - the Roman "aetia" in which he discusses the origins of specific names and customs and certain love poems in which he pictures an ideal society of the past, hospitable to lovers. There are few poems in which Propertius visualizes an ideal society set in contemporary times. This fact probably indicates what a gloomy view he took of the morality of his own age. Since the love poems in which Propertius treats the past appear in the first three books they will be considered before the "aetia".

In his treatment of the past Propertius displays more sympathy for the aristocratic moral ideal than either Tibullus or Ovid, although his attitude towards it is certainly not one of uncritical acceptance. His visions of the ideal society of the past centre not on the public virtues hallowed in the aristocratic tradition, but on the private virtues of feminine chastity ("pudor" or "pudicitia") and on the relationship of "fides" between lovers. However he treats these private moral qualities as earnestly as do the historians.

Most of his laments for the past take the form of wistful asides in poems lamenting the moral decadence of the present.<sup>8</sup> Thus in poem 1.16, a variation on the standard



paraclausithyron, the house door laments the vanished "pudicitia" of the past (1.16.2), before going on to complain of its present wicked mistress, who is determined (1.16.12) :

"turpior et saeculi vivere luxuria."

Similarly in poem 2.9, while upbraiding Cynthia for her faithlessness, Propertius sighs for the lost "pudor" of early Greece (2.9.18). And in 2.6, comparing the shamelessness of his own day to the purer society of the past, he points out that ancient homes were not decorated with erotic paintings to incite young girls to lust (2.6.33-34). Moreover he implies that in ancient times greater honour was shown to the gods.

Yet even in the poems where he displays most sympathy for the aristocratic moral ideal, Propertius still makes some significant changes to the traditional picture of the ideal society of the past. This is illustrated by his transformation of the legend of the rape of the Sabines in poem 2.6. Romulus has lost his halo and appears as little more than a bestial rapist (2.6.19-22) - a very different role from the one he plays in traditional versions.<sup>9</sup> While this unusual approach to the legend serves to inject a note of cynical humour into the poem, it can also be seen as an attack on the hypocrisy of traditional history.

An equally significant transformation of the traditional picture of the past appears in poem 3.13, where

Propertius follows a thunderous denunciation of the wickedness of his own age with a quieter and more thoughtful passage lamenting the lost past. He begins with the wistful exclamation (3.13.25-26):

"felix agrestum quondam pacata iuventus,  
divitiae quorum messis et arbor erant!"

and then goes on to picture an idyllic society of happy, faithful lovers living a life of rustic peace and total harmony with the gods. This vision is wholly unexpected, appearing as it does between two passages of strong moral indignation in the traditional style. Its context lends it added emphasis and underlines the novel quality of Propertius's approach to the past in this poem.

His other pictures of an ideal society which are not set specifically in the past usually follow this same model of a life of pastoral bliss devoted to the service of love. Often this is accompanied by material features or moral sentiments which the aristocratic ideal associated with devotion to the service of the state. Thus in 2.16.19-20 Propertius voices the devout prayer :

"atque utinam Romae nemo esset dives, et ipse  
straminea posset dux habitare casa!"

but goes on to point out that then girls would be unable to put their love up for sale, thus making life easier for the lover. And in 1.14 Propertius's eagerness to forswear the luxuries typically associated with moral decline is wholly contingent on his life of simplicity being accompanied by

bliss in love - itself a symptom of moral decline for the sternest traditional moralists. A similar outlook is apparent in poem 3.5, where the traditionally virtuous rejection of wealth is associated not only with a life of peace and love, but also with an implicit criticism of the public career, so much honoured in the aristocratic ideal.

Propertius brings out its ultimate futility by commenting (3.5.13-16) :

"haud ullas portabis opes Acherontis ad undas:

nudus ad infernas, stulte, vehere rates.

victor cum victis pariter miscebitur umbris:

consule cum Mario, capte Iugurtha, sedes."

Superficially Propertius resembles Tibullus in his incongruous linking of the trappings of the aristocratic ideal to the ideal life of the lover, but his intentions are not humorous as Tibullus's often are. Most of Propertius's visions of an ideal society devoted to love constitute a serious challenge to the validity of the aristocratic ideal.

Propertius's approach to the traditional version of the past is even more complex in the Roman "aetia" than in the love poems. The "aetia" have been the subject of intense critical discussion and speculation. There are two main schools of thought among critics as to their intention.<sup>10</sup> One group, of which Boucher is the chief exponent, argues that they are genuinely patriotic literary exercises. The other, of which Sullivan is perhaps the major representative,

sees them as ironical in intention. My own view is that the second group of critics is substantially correct in its interpretation. Sufficient evidence exists to suggest that the "aetia" have an ironical undertone and that they contain a satirical transformation of the traditional aristocratic picture of early Rome.

Propertius himself gives some illuminating indications of his approach to the subject of early Rome in his graceful "recusatio" poem 3.3.<sup>11</sup> In the course of this he mentions the ambitions he had cherished of emulating Ennius and writing about the heroic episodes of Rome's past, until Apollo chided him in a dream (3.3.16) :

"non hinc ulla tibi speranda est fama, Properti"

and advised him that his light craft should not be overloaded (3.3.22) :

"non est ingenii cumba gravanda tui."

Two important points emerge from this - firstly that Propertius was chary of writing about early Rome at all and secondly that lightness of touch was one of the major aims of his poetry. Both these points have important implications for his handling of early Rome in the "aetia".

Of course it might be argued that Propertius had changed his poetic aims by the time he began to write Book 4, which contains the "aetia". However poem 4.1 strongly suggests that he had not. Since this poem itself contains a long description of early Rome and since it provides some

insight into the nature of the "aetia", it may be useful to examine it. The poem opens with an address to an unnamed "hospes" in the course of which Propertius points out the major landmarks of the city and delivers a brisk commentary on the customs and early history of the place. He includes many of the architectural and topographical details mentioned by Livy<sup>12</sup> and normally associated with accounts of the moral excellence of the place. Indeed this seems at first glance to be a thoroughly traditional and reverent account of early Rome.<sup>13</sup> Like Livy Propertius dwells on details which show the rustic simplicity of this society (the cattle on the Palatine (4.1.3-4), the gods of clay ("fictilibus ... deis", 4.1.5), the rough huts (4.1.6) and the primitive theatre (4.1.15-16) ) and hint at the virtue of its inhabitants (in 4.1.6 he points out their hardihood and in 4.1.17ff he notes their devout loyalty to Roman gods :

"nulli cura fuit externos quaerere divos." )

He also re-tells some of Rome's hallowed legends with apparent reverence.

However there is an abrupt change of direction in the middle of the elegy. The first section ends with Propertius's extravagant vow that he will give his slender talents to the service of his country (4.1.59-60) :

"sed tamen exiguo quodcumque e pectore rivi  
fluxerit, hoc patriae serviet omne meae."

(a rather absurd turn of phrase, which ought to make us suspicious, particularly since it is followed by some veiled

mockery of the "hirsuta ... corona" (4.1.61) of the epic poet Ennius who had celebrated the great deeds of the Romans). He adds that he will devote himself to patriotic themes (4.1.69-70)

"sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum:

has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus."

At this point the grotesque figure of the astrologer Horus enters the poem and, after an absurd and rambling account of his credentials, issues an imperious order to Propertius to stop meddling with the affairs of the "insano ... Foro" (4.1.134 - a highly significant phrase) and to restrict himself to elegy, as Apollo had once commanded him. This leads us back to the advice of Apollo in poem 3.3 and strongly suggests that Propertius was still determined to evade any pressure to write on national themes and intended to preserve his lightness of touch.

An examination of his "aetia" shows that although he may have succumbed to pressure to write on national themes he succeeded in retaining this poetic lightness of touch. In doing so he significantly transformed some of the features of the traditional version of the past. Traditionally the aristocratic ideal demanded a celebration of Rome's military and moral excellence and a flattering portrait of her early inhabitants from those who chose to write about her past, but Propertius flouts this tradition. Poem 4.2, the "aetion" on the god Vertumnus, is of little significance in this respect,<sup>14</sup> but the remaining "aetia", poems 4.4, 4.9 and

4.10, contain ample evidence of the novelty of his approach to the past.

In poem 4.4 Propertius casts a Roman legend in an elegiac mould and produces a startling version of the Tarpeia story. Although he makes a show of condemning her sin (4.4.1, 4.4.17, 4.4.94), he basically presents Tarpeia in a sympathetic light. Her motive for betraying Rome is shown as love for Tatius rather than greed for gain (which was her motive in the traditional version<sup>15</sup>) and she is given many of the qualities of the typical elegiac lover. Because of her love for Tatius, she looks forward with enthusiasm to being led away as his "captiva" (4.4.33-34), thus recalling the "captivus amoris" of elegy.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, like the archetypal lover of elegy, she puts her passion before her duty to her country and the gods (4.4.35-36). Like the conventional "lena", she is prepared to use witchcraft to gain success in love (4.4.51-52). And with the typically specious and distorted values of the lover, which provide the foundation of so much of the humour of love elegy, she is prepared to re-shape tradition for her own ends, telling Tatius (4.4.55-58) :

"sic hospes pariamne regina sub aula?

dos tibi non humilis prodita Roma venit.

si minus, at raptae ne sint impune Sabinae,

me rape et alterna lege repende vices!"

And although Propertius says that Tarpeia shamed Vesta with her sin (4.4.17-18, 4.4.36), he says that Vesta was largely

responsible for it (4.4.69-70) :

"nam Vesta, Iliacae felix tutela favillae,  
culpam alit et plures condit in ossa faces."

Certainly Propertius makes some show of the righteous moral indignation which tradition would lead us to expect, but he undermines his own position by his sympathetic treatment of Tarpeia. The poem thus appears as yet another mutation of traditional moral attitudes to the past.

A similar elegiac note is struck in Propertius's account of Hercules in 4.9. Here again Propertius makes use of incongruity to shake the dignity of traditional versions of the past. Anderson points out that there are extensive verbal parallels between the descriptions of the "exclusus amator" in love elegy and Propertius's picture of Hercules, shut out from a shrine and hearing the laughter of girls inside.<sup>17</sup> While Propertius avoids the broad, farcical style of Ovid, a certain humorous undertone is apparent. The picture of Hercules addressing his oxen in high flown rhetorical style and assuring them that (4.9.20) :

"nobile erit Romae pascua vestra Forum"

is amusing enough, but Hercules begging for a drink of water is wholly ludicrous, especially when he adds the plea that he once passed for a girl (4.9.49-50) :

"mollis et hirsutum cepit mihi fascia pectus,  
et manibus duris apta puella fui."

Moreover Anderson points out that the rites of the Bona Dea probably carried amusing and scandalous connotations for a



Roman audience after the famous transvestite escapade of Clodius.<sup>18</sup> Any expectations of a dignified treatment of the past in the traditional mode are completely shattered in this poem.

Even in poem 4.10, which at first sight appears to be the final fulfilment of Propertius's promise to write on national themes, there is an ambivalent undertone. Romulus is depicted conventionally enough as a figure of austere virtue (4.10.17-18) :

"Urbis virtutumque parens sic vincere suevit,  
qui tulit a parco frigida castra lare",

but in the second part of the poem Propertius shows more sympathy for Rome's enemy Veii than admiration for Rome's hero Cossus (4.10.27-30) :

"heu Vei veteres! et vos tum regna fuistis,  
et vestro posita est aurea sella foro:  
nunc intra muros pastoris bucina lenti  
cantat, et in vestris ossibus arva metunt."

Moreover, as Sullivan points out,<sup>19</sup> the "spolia opima" of the temple of Jupiter Feretrius were the centre of a bitter dispute in Propertius's own time and were consequently a controversial subject for poetry. Sullivan calls the elegy "a pointed reopening of a delicate question about the spolia opima, supposedly settled in 29 B.C. (Dio C. 51.24), and incorporating an elegiac lament over the slaying of Lar Tolumnius, King of the Veii, by A. Cornelius Cossus." <sup>20</sup>  
In its sympathy for Rome's enemies and its embarrassing

implications for Augustus this elegy can thus be seen as yet another hit at aristocratic moral sentiment.

Like Tibullus Propertius undermines the traditional aristocratic version of the past by awakening certain expectations in his reader and then frustrating them. He includes in his pictures of the past and the ideal society many of the features of traditional versions of these, particularly in his rejection of wealth and his emphasis on the primitive nature of early Rome and the simplicity of her inhabitants. This leads the reader to expect a homily on the moral superiority of the past, but these expectations are rarely fulfilled. Certainly Propertius agrees with the historians in lamenting the collapse of private morality, but he emphatically refuses to celebrate the martial and political virtues of early Rome. Instead he demonstrates his resistance to the aristocratic moral ideal by picturing an ideal society devoted to love, by re-casting hallowed legends in an elegiac mould and by praising only those Roman heroes who were associated with embarrassing controversy.

Ovid seems to have enjoyed a high degree of immunity to the creeping disease of nostalgia for the past. In his work the veiled challenges to the aristocratic moral ideal of the earlier elegists become an open rebellion. With impudent humour he turns the traditional view of moral decline upside down and even takes the astonishing step of denying the superiority of the past and presenting contemporary Rome as the ideal society. Although pictures of the

past appear only infrequently in his work they have great significance because of the systematic reversal of traditional moral values which they contain. The same is true of his treatment of the ideal society.

This reversal of traditional values appears dramatically in the outrageous advice given by the bawd to her protégée in Am. 1.8. In the course of this Dipsas kindly points out to her pupil that the fidelity of the ancient Sabines is obsolete (Am. 1.8.39-42)

"forsitan immundae Tatio regnante Sabinae  
noluerint habiles pluribus esse viris;  
nunc Mars externis animos exercet in armis,  
at Venus Aeneae regnat in urbe sui."

The statement that modern women are more promiscuous than ancient is conventional enough. What is remarkable is the fact that it is spoken not in condemnation, but in approval.<sup>21</sup>

A similar reversal of the expected moral sentiments appears in the nonchalant comment in Am. 3.4, where it is accompanied by an equally unexpected slant on a hallowed Roman legend (Am. 3.4.37-40) :

"rusticus est nimium, quem laedit adultera coniunx,  
et notos mores non satis urbis habet  
in qua Martigenae non sunt sine crimine nati  
Romulus Iliades Iliadesque Remus."

This device of using ancient legend as a precedent for modern

sin is one which Ovid was to use even more extensively and wittily in his later work, the Ars amatoria.<sup>22</sup>

The only poem in the Amores in which Ovid presents a picture of the past allowing a serious interpretation is Am. 3.8. In this elegy he uses a conventional complaint about the greed of women to launch into an impassioned attack on men who seek wealth through warfare. By way of contrast he describes the peaceful reign of Saturn (Am. 3.8.35-44) :

"at cum regna senex caeli Saturnus haberet,  
 omne lucrum tenebris alta premebat humus.  
 aeraque et argentum cumque auro pondera ferri  
 manibus admorat, nullaue massa fuit.  
 at meliora dabat - curvo sine vomere fruges  
 pomaque et in quercu mella reperta cava.  
 nec valido quisquam terram scindebat aratro,  
 signabat nullo limite mensor humum,  
 non freta demisso verrebant eruta remo;  
 ultima mortali tum via litus erat."

This condensed version of the Golden Age with its details of food provided by the earth of its own accord and the absence of wealth, agriculture, boundaries and ships closely resembles similar passages in Vergil (Ecl. 4.13-30) and Tibullus (1.3.35-50) and in Ovid's own later work, the Metamorphoses (M. 1.89-112). This particular passage has its impact largely because of its central position in the poem and the context in which it appears.

After an attack on the individual girl and her new lover Ovid inserts this catalogue of the blessings of the mythical Golden Age, followed immediately by a sweeping general indictment of contemporary Rome. Thus it occupies a pivotal position in the poem and serves as a useful yardstick by which to evaluate the greed and turbulence of his own times, which are described immediately afterwards.<sup>23</sup>

What begins as a conventional elegiac complaint about a rich rival turns into a fierce denunciation of the cruelty and injustice associated with the public career (Am. 3.8.51ff). This is no mere scuffle with a "dives amator" left behind at low tide by the wave of Hellenistic literary influence. It is a bitter attack on the Roman moral ideal which glorified success in the public career. Significantly, Ovid dissociates his ideal society of the past from such ambitions. He is evidently serious in doing so, since there is none of the characteristic irony, lavish exaggeration, suspicious incongruity or self-contradiction in this passage which Ovid employs elsewhere when he is striving for humorous effect.

On a lighter note the austere Sabine women make a brief re-appearance in the Medicamina Faciei where they are treated with the same irreverent humour as in the Amores. Like Propertius, Ovid stresses the rustic simplicity of the Sabine women, but he finds nothing to praise in this. Instead he compares them unfavourably with the "cultae puellae" of his own day and makes their homely appearance

and occupations seem ridiculous (M.F. 11-16) :

"Forsitan antiquae Tatio sub rege Sabinae  
maluerint, quam se, rura paterna coli:  
cum matrona, premens altum rubicunda sedile,  
assiduum duro pollice nebat opus,  
ipsaque claudebat quos filia paverat agnos,  
ipsa dabat virgas caesasque ligna foco."

The reversal of traditional moral values is completed in the passage which follows immediately after, in which Ovid praises modern women for their "cultus". This quality is manifested in their taste for gold embroidered clothes, elegant, scented hairstyles and expensive jewellery - all objects which are traditional insignia of moral decadence.

Ovid's witty transformations and rejections of the traditional pictures of the past continue unabated in the Ars amatoria. Here he often uses the humorous technique already encountered in the Amores of re-shaping Roman history and legends to his own ends. Thus the Allia, the day of Rome's defeat by the Gauls, is recommended to the lover as a day on which he will be in little danger of having to give presents (A.A. 1.413-414). Similarly Venus, Aeneas and other august figures of Roman legend are pressed into the service of the lover. In A.A. 1.59-60 Ovid praises Rome for excelling in the production of one commodity above all:

"quot caelum stellas, tot habet tua Roma puellas:  
mater et Aeneae constat in urbe sui."

Venus's motherhood of Aeneas is also used as a slick means

of encouraging girls timid about sexual adventures (A.A. 3.85-88) :

"ut Veneri, quem luget adhuc, donetur Adonis:

unde habet Aenean Harmoniamque suo?

ite per exemplum, genus o mortale, dearum,

gaudia nec cupidis vestra negate viris."

This is an outrageous distortion of the role normally played by Aeneas in traditional versions of the past.

Probably the most engaging example of Ovid's gleeful irreverence towards hallowed Roman legends is his account of the rape of the Sabines, which is "amusingly presented in the learned Hellenistic manner as an aetiological story, explaining why the theatre is still a dangerous place for pretty girls".<sup>24</sup> His description of the episode is of approximately the same length as Livy's, but is entirely different in tone.<sup>25</sup> Unlike Livy, who makes a valiant and largely successful effort to lend dignity to a singularly undignified performance, Ovid is quick to emphasize the humorous details of the affair. In the first place he transfers the setting of the incident to the theatre instead of the solemn games of the Consualia. Wardman comments on this choice of locale :

"By attributing Romulus' assault to the theatre, Ovid, in effect, can score off the critics of the theatre by implying that sexual licence, as a mark of relaxed living was an original feature of the Romulean world."<sup>26</sup>

Moreover his description of the event is cast in the

form of a smooth, scarcely perceptible digression from a lecture to libidinous young men on the best techniques for tracking and trapping young women of a type (A.A. 1.91-92):

"... quod ames, quod ludere possis,  
quodque semel tangas, quodque tenere velis."

By placing the incident of the rape of the Sabines in this context (almost as an illustrative example of the technique in action), Ovid impugns by implication the motives of Romulus's men in seizing the women. While Livy seeks to elevate the early Romans' motives by attributing their violent action to their anxious desire to obtain wives in order to produce children and thus populate the new city, Ovid nowhere mentions such a patriotic objective. Instead he stresses the lust of the men, who, at the given signal (A.A. 1.115-116) :

"protinus exiliunt, animum clamore fatentes,  
virginibus cupidas iniciuntque manus."

And although "virginibus" and "cupidas" are not grammatically linked, one cannot help but suspect that the juxtaposition of the two words is deliberate. The "cupido" of the men is given added emphasis by its re-appearance in line 128, where each man carries off a girl "cupido ... sinu."

A certain gentle mockery is also apparent in the emphasis which Ovid lays on the roughness of the scene and the people. The theatre is rustic and unadorned (A.A. 1.103-106) :



"tunc neque marmoreo pendebant vela theatro,  
 nec fuerant liquido pulpita rubra croco,  
 illic quas tulerant nemorosa Palatia, frondes  
 simpliciter positae, scaena sine arte fuit."

A number of small details enhance this impression of slightly clownish simplicity - the "hirsutas ... comas" of the spectators (A.A. 1.108), the "rudem ... modum" of the flute player (A.A. 1.111), the applause of the audience ("plausus tunc arte carebant", A.A. 1.113).

However the final touch of Ovidian humour appears in the comment at the end of the passage (A.A. 1.129-132) :

"Romule, militibus scisti dare commoda solus  
 haec mihi si dederis commoda, miles ero.  
 scilicet ex illo sollemnia more theatra  
 nunc quoque formosis insidiosa manent."

Even as it stands this is clearly outrageous mockery of a hallowed legend, but Hollis points out that there is added piquancy in Ovid's use of the term "commoda", since " "commoda" was the technical prose term for the "fringe-benefits" of military life, in addition to regular wages, and at this very time Augustus was having difficulties in filling his legions due to the lowness of these extra rewards."<sup>27</sup> Ovid's farcical presentation of the past thus serves not only to make fun of traditional moral sentiments, but also to deflate the dignity of that arch-exemplar of aristocratic moralists, Augustus.

Ovid expresses his attitudes towards nostalgia for the past with admirable clarity and firmness in a passage contrasting early Rome with the city of his own times. (A.A. 3.113-138) :

"simplicitas rudis ante fuit: nunc aurea Roma est,  
 et domiti magnas possidet orbis opes.  
 aspice quae nunc sunt Capitolia, quaeque fuerunt; 115  
 alterius dices illa fuisse Iovis.  
 curia concilio nunc est dignissima tanti;  
 de stipula Tatio regna tenente fuit.  
 quae nunc sub Phoebō ducibusque Palatia fulgent,  
 quid nisi araturis pascua bubus erant? 120  
 prisca iuvent alios: ego me nunc denique natum  
 gratulor: haec aetas moribus apta meis.  
 non quia nunc terrae lentum subducitur aurum,  
 lectaque diverso littore concha venit:  
 nec quia decrescunt effosso marmore montes, 125  
 nec quia caeruleae mole fugantur aquae:  
 sed quia cultus adest, nec nostros mansit in annos  
 rusticitas, priscis illa superstes avis."

At first glance much of this material seems very familiar. The details of rough huts, browsing oxen and a senate house made of wattles all appear in traditional versions of early Rome<sup>28</sup> and the extravagant follies of the building craze in first century Rome are well known from the pages of Sallust.<sup>29</sup> However Ovid's responses to all this are entirely original. He shows nothing but disdain for the

early Romans' "simplicitas" and "rusticitas" and he does not even possess the veneer of respect for early times which appears in the works of Tibullus and Propertius. On the contrary, the whole point of his description of early Rome is to demonstrate its inferiority to the city of his own day. This is a daring reversal of the moral sentiments contained in traditional contrasts between the past and the present, which normally aim to show the wickedness and inferiority of the latter.

Ovid's reasons for seeing contemporary Rome as his model of the ideal society reflect an equally original distortion of traditional moral sentiments. Although he denies any enthusiasm for the worst excesses of contemporary extravagance in the form of gold, exotic shells, marble and masonry (presented by Sallust as symbols of moral decline in B.C. 13.1), he nevertheless attributes his preference for the present to contemporary "cultus", a quality almost as detestable to traditional moralists. Elsewhere in Ovid's poetry it is associated with feminine extravagance and adornment (M.F. *passim*) with dandyism in men (A.A. 3.433) and with mockery of Roman legend (A.m. 3.6.47 and 3.6.55, where Ilia lacks "cultus") and it appears almost as a prerequisite for ensnaring a lover (Am. 1.8.26, 2.10.5, A.A. 3.101). The other characteristics of modern Rome which seem to make it the ideal society in Ovid's eyes are the abundance of women (A.A. 1.59-60) and of places to hunt them (A.A. 1.67ff) and their many and varied accomplishments,

which, he urges, should include skill in dress (A.A. 3.101ff), music, poetry, dancing and gambling (A.A. 3.311ff).

Obviously this is an absurd travesty of traditional versions of the ideal society. Nor does Ovid limit his burlesques to the aristocratic moral ideal. There is also a witty shaft at the standard elegiac versions of the ideal society in his complaint in A.A. 2.277-278 :

"aurea sunt vere nunc saecula; plurimus auro  
venit honos : auro conciliatur amor."

There is certainly no trace of nostalgia for the past, moralistic or otherwise, in Ovid's work.

A good deal can be learned about Ovid's attitudes to the aristocratic moral ideal both from what he says and from what he does not say. Conspicuously lacking are the panegyrics of worthy legendary Romans and the fulminations against their wicked counterparts, whose careers provide so many uplifting or cautionary examples in the works of Livy. In their place is a wickedly amusing distortion of ancient legends in which the customs and legendary characters of Rome are all seen through the astigmatic gaze of the lover. To an even greater extent than Tibullus and Propertius Ovid relies on the tactics of surprise and incongruity in his treatment of the past and the ideal society. Like them he associates the standard material trappings of the traditional version of the past with unexpected moral sentiments. However, where Tibullus and Propertius are sometimes serious and often ambivalent in their response to the aristocratic moral ideal, Ovid is almost invariably outrageously humorous.

#### CHAPTER FOUR : Moral decline and private morality.

In approaching the subject of private morality, the love elegists had two major sources of material on which to draw. The first was the moral code of Greek and Roman comedy - light-hearted, cynical and bearing only a superficial resemblance to the moral practices of real life. The second was the moral code of the Roman aristocracy - serious, idealistic and bearing, in all probability, an even more superficial resemblance to the moral practices of real life. The conflict between these two codes is responsible for many of the tensions and contradictions apparent in the treatment of moral decline and private morality in love elegy.

Tibullus's treatment of private morality is fundamentally humorous and is obviously based to a large extent on the conventions of comedy. Even though he makes a number of denunciations of the wickedness of his own age, a careful examination of these passages reveals that they are predominantly farcical in intent. However "variatio" is a very important artistic principle in his work and sometimes there is an alternation of serious and comic tones within a single poem. It is only on rare occasions when he is discussing life in the country or the atrocities of war that Tibullus gives any evidence of more serious moral preoccupations.

Among his most amusing poems are those in which

Tibullus foreshadows Ovid's humorous role as "praeceptor amoris". The most important of these are 1.4, 1.8 and 1.9. In poem 1.4 Tibullus approaches the god Priapus for advice on the wooing of boys and receives a long homily on the subject. He then announces his intention to become a "magister amoris" himself, but reluctantly admits that his knowledge is of no help to him in his affair with Marathus. Tibullus adopts a deliberately pompous tone for his mock didactic theme and the result is very amusing.<sup>1</sup> The moral standards reflected in the poem are those of comedy and humorous poetry, full of opportunism, deceit and a generous readiness to disregard inconvenient oaths of fidelity. Thus Priapus urges his pupil enthusiastically (21-24):

"nec iurare time : veneris periuria venti  
 inrita per terras et freta summa ferunt  
 gratia magna Iovi : vetuit Pater ipse valere,  
 iurasset cupide quidquid ineptus amor."

The empty oaths of lovers are a favourite motif of ancient literature. K.F. Smith points out parallels in the works of writers as diverse as Hesiod, Plato, Ovid and Seneca (among others).<sup>2</sup> This cynical piece of advice is clearly intended to amuse and shock the reader and it is lent added piquancy by Priapus's outrageously hypocritical stance later in the poem, when he complains about the wickedness of contemporary times (57-60) :

"heu male nunc artes miseras haec saecula tractant:  
 iam tener adsuevit munera velle puer.  
 at tua, qui venerem docuisti vendere primus,  
 quisquis es infelix urgeat ossa lapis."

On the surface, at least, this outburst resembles some of Propertius's outcries about moral decline.<sup>3</sup> Like Propertius, Tibullus presents greed and venality in love as the chief symptoms of the wickedness of the age and blames them on the ill-defined inventor of prostitution. However even the most cursory examination shows that Tibullus is handling the subject of moral decline quite differently from Propertius. In the first place, he puts these words into the mouth of the singularly undignified Priapus, who is not only "ugly ... ithyphallic ... static, exposed to the elements, yet oracular in the most cogent manner"<sup>4</sup> but has also demonstrated his own moral turpitude early in the poem by the exploitative cynicism of his advice on trapping young boys. Indeed none of the personae of the poem - including Priapus, Tibullus and the boys he is pursuing - displays the slightest shred of lofty moral principle. Priapus does not offer any serious cures for the moral blight of greed, but instead follows up his attack on greed with some cunning psychological blackmail in the form of special pleading for the poet (67-70) :

"at qui non audit Musas, qui vendit amorem,  
 Idaeae currus ille sequatur Opis,  
 et tercentenas erroribus expleat urbes  
 et secet ad Phrygios vilia membra modos."

Thus his attack on moral decline has the useful function of introducing a spate of persuasion, intimidation and bargaining, intended to bring down the price of the boys' favours to the currency of verse instead of hard cash. What

Tibullus is offering us in this poem is not a genuine outcry against moral decline. Rather it is a brilliant facsimile of the type of moral diatribe which might be expected in a serious didactic poem, but which is riotously incongruous in this context. Moral themes play an important role in this poem, but only as a subject for mischievous humour.

Similarly in poem 1.8, another elegy in the Marathus cycle, moral notions play a humorous part. Once again Tibullus adopts his role of "magister amoris" and offers advice to Pholoe, the girl-friend of Marathus. Many of the standard themes of love poetry are used in the elegy - the cruelty of Venus, the futility of adornment, the emptiness of wealth without love, the transience of youth and love's fulfilment. In his advice to Pholoe Tibullus uses some lofty moral terminology, warning her against greed ("munera ne poscas", 29) and pride ("at te poena manet, ni desinis esse superba", 77), but the warnings carry little force. The tone of the poem is essentially light and playful and the moral conventions reflected in it are those of comedy. Marathus reminds Pholoe that heaven helps lovers to deceive (1.8.56) :

"ipse dedit cupidis fallere posse deus."

and Tibullus recalls how Marathus himself once played cruel games with lovers, as Pholoe does now. The two young lovers are presented as equally amoral and Tibullus's own moral strictures appear pompous and laughable.



Some of the motifs of this elegy are expanded in poem 1.9, which follows immediately after it. In this case Tibullus is the victim of Marathus's deceit. Marathus has been persuaded by a wealthy lover to break his vows of fidelity to Tibullus. Tibullus reproaches him with his greed and lack of feeling, prays for the satisfying revenge of seeing his rival made a cuckold and finally warns Marathus that he will soon be supplanted in the poet's affections. The elegy has some extremely humorous elements. Tibullus has borrowed extensively from comedy and none of the characters in the poem can boast a scrap of genuine moral integrity. Marathus is shown as greedy (11), deceitful (83) and insensitive (75ff), the rival is lecherous, gouty and old (73-74), while his wife is elegant ("cultu puella" 74), unfaithful and possessed of a wanton sister ("lasciva soror" 59), who stimulates her competitive mettle (59ff). Tibullus himself appears as a gullible buffoon ("non ... fallere doctus" (37) and "stulte confisus amori" (45) ), who delivers pompous homilies on the corrupting effects of wealth (17) and is constantly drying Marathus's tears (38) and singing his praises in a simple minded fashion (47).<sup>5</sup>

The usual moral flexibility of lovers is evident in the first few lines. Marathus lightly betrays his "foedera" (2) and although Tibullus warns that he will be punished, he adds the comforting afterthought (1.9.5-6) :

" ..... aequum est impune licere

numina formosis laedere vestra semel."

The arguments which follow this conciliatory statement are extremely interesting. Tibullus suggests that "lucra" is the normal goal of mortals, arguing that its pursuit is the driving motivation of farmers and traders and adding that gifts have caused the downfall of his boy (1.9.7-11) :

"lucra petens habili tauros adiungit aratro  
 et durum terrae rusticus urget opus;  
 lucra petituras freta per parentia ventis  
 ducunt instabiles sidera certa rates.  
 muneribus mens est captus puer .... "

The effect of this litany is to make Marathus appear less culpable, a mere lemming in a mass movement.

Like Propertius, Tibullus sees greed as a universal problem and deplores the corrupting power of gold (17ff.) and the influence of those who use it unscrupulously (53). Yet although the two poets describe corruption in Rome in such similar terms, their literary aims are vastly different. Tibullus's poem is fundamentally humorous. His outcries against the depraving effects of gold are pompous and absurd and they are suitably met by Marathus's extravagant claims of immunity to the temptations of wealth (31ff). The rhetoric is a necessary part of their roles, as suspect as it is colourful. It cannot be taken as evidence for genuine moral outrage on the part of Tibullus.

There are two extremely amusing poems - 2.3 and 2.4 - in which Tibullus inveighs against moral decline in the

grand manner. In poem 2.3 Nemesis's departure for the country gives him an opportunity to perform some astonishing theatricals of grief, deliver an emotional diatribe against greed and voice his longing for an age when girls were more accessible. In the course of all this he adopts some of the classic attitudes of the traditional Roman moralists, but he does so only in order to make high-spirited fun of them a few lines later.

At the beginning of the poem he strikes a dramatic, wistful pose and relentlessly holds it through eighty lines of mock serious verse. Much of the humour in the elegy comes from this apparent dignity, which is repeatedly punctured. Thus Tibullus's description of country activities in 1.5ff contains some picturesque detail, but he deliberately ruins the rustic idyll with a few deft touches of absurdity. In lines 9-10 he pictures himself suffering from sunburn and blistered hands and even the god Apollo is impudently burlesqued. The cattle bellow down his songs (19-20) and he never combs his hair (23-25).

The absurdity is heightened when Tibullus launches into a lament for the past (29-30) and a vibrant denunciation of his own age (35-48) :

"ferrea non venerem sed praedam saecula laudant:

praeda tamen multis est operata malis.

praeda feras acies cinxit discordibus armis;

hinc cruor, hinc caedes mors propiorque venit.

praeda vago iussit geminare pericula ponto,  
 bellica cum dubiis rostra dedit ratibus. 40  
 praedator cupit immensos obsidere campos,  
 ut multa innumera iugera pascant oves;  
 cui lapis externus curae est, urbisque tumultu  
 portatur validis mille columnia iugis,  
 claudit et indomitum moles mare, lentus ut intra 45  
 neglegat hibernas piscis adesse minas.  
 at mihi laeta trahant Samiae convivium testae  
 fictaque Cumana lubrica terra rota."

Although he laments the absence of love rather than the absence of austerity in modern times, Tibullus nevertheless sees many aspects of Rome's moral crisis in the same light as do Sallust and Livy. Like them, he sees greed as the cause of many evils and denounces the luxuries associated with it. He even inserts a sanctimonious claim to simplicity in his own life style in his stated preference for earthenware vessels. Taken out of context, this entire passage has many elements which would warm the heart of a traditional Roman moralist. It might have been written by Sallust or Livy and indeed it bears a close resemblance to passages from both these writers.<sup>6</sup>

But Tibullus has not finished. He now executes a volte-face which is as dazzling a virtuoso performance as his previous outburst of austerity. Now he exclaims  
 (49-52) :

"heu heu divitibus video gaudere puellas:

iam veniant praedae, si Venus optat opes:

ut mea luxuria Nemesis fluat utque per urbem

incedat donis conspicienda meis."

and goes on to describe the luxuries he will shower on Nemesis. This has the effect of completely nullifying the colourful invective which preceded it. Tibullus's pretensions to moral rectitude are exposed as a glorious practical joke. The fun is taken a stage further in the remaining section of the poem when he proposes to reject the produce of the country and return to the simple life "prisco more" (68). This affords him an opening for a slyly humorous evocation of a past society dedicated to love and acorn eating and he even breathes the "pious" prayer (74) :

" ..... si fas est, mos precor ille redi."

The tone of this poem is entirely farcical. Tibullus has borrowed the terminology and attitudes of traditional Roman morality only in order to make fun of it. His pious vocabulary, his dazzling changes of moral outlook and his witty affectation of nostalgia for the past are all founded on parody of traditional moral creeds.

In poem 2.4 he displays an equally irreverent attitude towards the hallowed values of traditional morality. The central theme of the elegy is Nemesis's greed and in his efforts to satisfy it the poet shows an outrageous indifference to the honour and property of his family. With

cavalier insouciance he bids farewell to his ancestral freedom in the opening lines of the poem (1-2) :

"Hic mihi servitium video dominantque paratam:  
iam mihi, libertas illa paterna, vale."

"Paterna libertas" was one of the most cherished Roman institutions<sup>7</sup> and this statement alone would be sufficiently shocking, but there is worse to come. After further complaints about the girl's greed, he exclaims (21-23) :

"at mihi per caedem et facinus sunt dona paranda,  
ne iaceam clausam flebilis ante domum;  
aut rapiam suspensa sacris insignia fanis."

He then threatens wittily to lay his "sacrilegas ... manus" (26) on Venus's temple first, since she is responsible for his troubles.

After thus establishing himself as a thoroughly amoral and irresponsible character, Tibullus next adopts an entirely different stance. With sententious fervour he castigates those who corrupt young women with luxuries and make them wicked (27-31) :

"o pereat quicumque legit viridesque smaragdos  
et niveam Tyrio murice tingit oven.  
addit avaritiae causas et Coa puellis  
vestis et e rubro lucida concha mari  
haec fecere malas ....."

It is the classic diatribe against moral decline with the

usual symptoms of feminine greed and venality in love and the habitual causes of corruption - exotic luxuries from the East. And to emphasize his indignation even further, Tibullus follows this outburst with an edifying lecture to Nemesis on the fate of the bad girl and the good girl.

However it would be unwise to take this moral fervour too seriously, for Tibullus soon slips back into his old inglorious attitudes, explaining casually (51-52) :

"vera quidem moneo, sed prosunt quid mihi vera?

illius est nobis lege colendus amor"

and following this with the scandalous resolution (53-54) :

"quin etiam, sedes iubeat si vendere avitas,

ite sub imperium sub titulumque, Lares."

Certainly the "Lares familiares" were thought of as friendly, familiar gods, but they were customarily treated with great respect. Offerings were made to them at family meals and on special family occasions and their cult was later associated with the worship of the Genius of the Princeps himself.<sup>8</sup> Moreover similar deities, the "Lares praestites", were considered guardians of the State in general. Thus Tibullus's statement is an outrageous affront to traditional religious sentiment.

This is an extremely funny poem. Although it contains a seemingly earnest attack on moral decline, closer examination reveals that this is nothing but a gleeful hoax. The

impassioned moral outburst is delivered by a shameless youth so lost to every sentiment of honour that he is not only prepared to bid farewell to his ancient liberty and sate his mistress's greed by crime and murder, but will even stoop to sell his household gods. Traditional Roman moral values permeate this poem, but only as subjects of fun.

There is a further group of poems in which the treatment of morality is primarily humorous, which nevertheless have a more serious undertone. These are the two paraclausithyra, poems 1.2 and 1.5, and the final poem in the Delia cycle, poem 1.6. In all three elegies the influence of comedy is readily apparent. Several of the familiar characters of comedy - the corrupting bawd, the greedy girl, the impoverished young lover and the cuckolded husband - appear, along with their customary vices. Although there is an undercurrent of tension in the poems, Tibullus's handling of these characters is essentially light-hearted and witty and, in spite of his protestations of outrage, he seems distinctly amused by their moral foibles.

Thus poem 1.2 contains many of the classic components of comedy. The lover is tormented, half intoxicated and wholly impervious to rain, cold or danger, the girl is deceitful, the husband jealous but gullible and the witch, who is an aficionado in the art of drawing stars from the sky or turning back rivers, is considerably less successful at the task of dissolving love. All the moral aspects of



the situation are handled with the jaunty irreverence typical of comedy. Delia is encouraged to trick her guard and Tibullus applauds this piece of deceit, the gods are flippantly recruited to help and there is an impudent variation of a famous proverb in Tibullus's exhortation to Delia (16) :

" ..... fortes adiuvat ipsa Venus."<sup>9</sup>

Tibullus himself appears as a buoyant young man with very few handicaps to his enjoyment in the form of moral principles. He constantly insists on the rightness of his own actions in trying to entice Delia away from her "coniunx", conduct which is clearly outrageous by traditional standards of morality.

F.O. Copley has an extremely interesting discussion of the moral conflicts contained in this poem in his monograph Exclusus Amator.<sup>10</sup> He argues that Tibullus presents himself as an adulterous lover in order to add excitement to the poem : "In writing of his love, he wishes to preserve all the spice of intrigue that is germane to the adulterous affair - the secret vigil at the door, the signals and signs, the risk of discovery, the peril of social condemnation - and he wishes to make himself and Delia more interesting by placing them both in the middle of the opposition between the code of love and the moral code of society. To do this, he must provide Delia with a husband. But Delia, like all the women of elegy, was a liberta; she did not have conubium." <sup>11</sup>

Thus Tibullus's behaviour appears as a challenge to traditional morality, but an entirely harmless one. It is intended to shock and amuse, but it is not seriously meant.

Yet even in this exuberant poem there is a brief change of tone when Tibullus lapses into the wistful refrain on country life that recurs throughout his poetry. As a preface to this he introduces another character, "the coarse perfidious dives amator",<sup>12</sup> whom he condemns for his stupid, unfeeling preference for the plunder of war to love (65-66) :

"ferreus ille fuit qui, te cum posset habere,  
maluerit praedas stultus et arma sequi."

This leads him into a vision of the type of life which he covets for himself (71-78) :

"ipse boves mea si tecum modo Delia possim  
iungere et in solito pascere monte pecus,  
et te dum liceat teneris retinere lacertis,  
mollis et inculta sit mihi somnus humo,  
quid Tyrio recubere toro sine amore secundo  
prodest cum fletu nox vigilanda venit?  
nam neque tunc plumae nec stragula picta soporem  
nec sonitus placidae ducere possit aquae."

In this digression Tibullus seems to have forgotten entirely the "coniunx" of the first part of the poem and to be picturing himself and Delia living happily alone together in the country. This vision carries entirely different

connotations from the picture of an adulterous lover singing drunkenly outside his paramour's door. Instead it has an aura of fidelity and virtuous simplicity. The emphatic rejection of the charms of wealth is particularly interesting. The contrast between poverty with bliss and wealth with misery is a favourite motif of ancient literature<sup>13</sup> and the life of poverty almost invariably carries laudable moral associations, especially when it has a rural setting. Moreover Tibullus's personality seems to have undergone a change along with his change in surroundings. In his day-dream he appears as a gentle rustic, a very different character from the enterprising young lover of the first part of the poem. This makes his earlier actions and feelings seem mere bravado, a role forced on him by necessity. It is clear from his distaste in 1.76 for "cum fletu nox vigilanda" that he wants security not adventure. There is deliberate self-irony and pathos in his inability either to sustain the raffish role he has fashioned for himself or to persuade Delia to share his simple dream. Tibullus produces this irony and pathos chiefly by exploiting the tension between the moral values of comedy expressed in his deceitful, hurly burly city love affair and the more traditional moral values implicit in his vision of country life.

A similar tension is apparent in poem 1.5. The circumstances in the poem are similar to those in Propertius 2.9. Tibullus has made vows for Delia's recovery from illness, but now that she has recovered she has deserted him

for a wealthier lover. Tibullus pleads with her, recalls the rustic "felicem vitam" which he had envisaged for them (19), abuses the bawd who has corrupted her and finally comforts himself with the thought that (70) :

"versatur celeri Fors levis orbe rotae."

The moral values reflected in the poem are primarily those of comedy. Tibullus as the young lover is doomed to defeat at the hands of the eternal triangle of greedy girl, rich rival and corrupting bawd (47-48) :

"haec nocuere mihi quod adest huic dives amator  
venit in exitium callida lena meum."

Both the girl and the bawd are opportunists, lacking all scruple. Delia is unmoved by the "foedera lecti" (7), the bawd is "rapax" (59) and Tibullus is forced to acknowledge that love will always be conquered by wealth ("donis vincitur omnis amor", 60) and that money is necessary to gain admission to the girl's house ("plena est percutienda manu", 68).

Unlike Propertius, he does not draw any grave moral conclusions from all this. The poem is basically light-hearted in tone and it makes no spirited denunciations of the decadence of contemporary society.

Nevertheless it does contain a more serious undertone. Although the bawd, the girl and the rival all display the casual amorality of comedy, Tibullus himself does not appear so blatantly deceitful and irresponsible as in some of the poems. He lays great stress on his devotion to Delia during

her sickness (7-17) and promises to be a "fidus comes" (63) if she will come back to him. Moreover by inserting the picture of country bliss into the poem, Tibullus presents an alternative to the heartless, mercenary world of comedy. The idyllic beauty of the passage is immediately expunged by the sordid details of his attempts to forget Delia and the robust anger of his curses against the bawd. The transition in tone from wistful yearning to harsh anger reflects his disillusionment well. Although the values of comedy ultimately triumph, Tibullus seems to suggest that a better world could exist if only people were not too greedy and corrupt to attain it.

There is a more complex overlapping of contradictory moral values in poem 1.6. In this elegy Tibullus suspects Delia of infidelity and, recalling the tricks they once used to deceive her husband, fears that he himself is now being deceived. He reminisces about the clandestine meetings the girl's mother arranged for them and tries to persuade Delia to be chaste by frightening her with a grim picture of the fate of an aged, faithless courtesan.

It is a complex and difficult poem, which splits in the middle into two almost unrelated halves. In the first part of the poem the moral standards of comedy are dominant. Delia is "callida" (6) and "fallax ... puella" (15) and Tibullus is every bit as unprincipled as she is. Indeed he has taught her her skill in deceit and has excellent grounds for distrusting her (7-8) :

"illa quidem iurata negat, sed credere durum est:

sic etiam de me pernegat usque viro."

The tone is basically humorous, although there is an edge to the humour, since Tibullus has been caught in his own snares and made to look foolish.<sup>14</sup> In its wit and ingenuity this part of the poem foreshadows much of Ovid's work, as Ovid acknowledges.<sup>15</sup>

But with the prophecy of the priestess of Bellona (43ff.) comes an odd change of tone. Tibullus seems to have forgotten the wronged "coniunx" of the first part of the poem and to have cast aside his own rakehell image. Instead he pictures himself and Delia engaged in an intensely serious, long relationship and even attempts to impose on her the standards of chastity traditionally associated with respectable Roman women, urging her mother (67-68) :

"sit modo casta, doce, quamvis non vitta ligatos  
impediat crines nec stola longa pedes."

His picture of the old woman "quae fida fuit nulli" (77) is bitter and vindictive and his final anxious plea to Delia (85-86) :

" .... nos, Delia, amoris  
exemplum cana simus uterque coma."

carries a note of desperation. The gaiety of the first half of the poem has vanished completely.

Critics have varied widely in their interpretations of this poem, particularly concerning the passage about

Delia's mother. J.H. Gaisser argues that "E, 6 is unified in structure and that a single tone of irony is sustained through the whole"<sup>16</sup> and sees this episode as mocking and ironical in tone. Debate has centred largely on the question of Tibullus's attitude to Delia's mother, whom he describes as "aurea ... anus" (58). Gaisser points out that the word "aurea" can mean either "precious" or "grasping" and on these grounds she suggests that the passage is "deliberately used by the poet ... to remind Delia and her mother that, regardless of their pretensions, they are in fact only courtesan and lena."<sup>17</sup> However the general consensus of critics is that the passage is sincerely meant.<sup>18</sup> This view seems more convincing, particularly since Tibullus salutes the old woman a few lines later as "dulcis anus" (63) (a phrase in which it is difficult to detect any double meanings), but this still leaves unsolved the problem of the odd change of tone in the poem.

It seems to me that Tibullus is using the change of tone for two purposes. Firstly it serves to underline his own feelings of ambivalence about his role as a comic lover. And secondly it serves to give the reader a sense of foreboding, a realization that Tibullus is heading for terrible disillusionment in his affair with Delia. One of Tibullus's primary aims in his love poems is to present his reactions to his love affairs. Rather than do this through bald statements, he usually prefers to act out his feelings, hesitations and responses, so that the onus of spotting the contradictions in his speech and behaviour is on the reader.

Disillusionment is an important aspect of his love affairs and in evoking this he makes considerable use of self-irony, often presenting himself as credulous and self-deluding. The handling of moral issues in poem 1.6 must be considered in relation to this fact, since the elegy constitutes an extremely interesting study in self-delusion.

In the first half of the poem Tibullus is obviously role playing. He appears as a true scapegrace lover, full of bravado, wit and impudence, entirely free from moral scruple. The tone of the verse is correspondingly light. But he is deceiving himself, for he cannot sustain this role. After line 42 there is a gradual bewildered dwindling of his buoyancy and humour and the tone becomes more serious, as he begins to picture the relationship he really wants. He and Delia shall be together as faithful lovers - and a different type of self-delusion begins as he tries to persuade himself that Delia will agree to this. Half realizing the hopelessness of this, he gains a sort of vicarious psychological revenge by picturing the plight of the aged courtesan and then returns to a final, futile plea for fidelity (85-86).

The poem is primarily about self deception and disillusionment, not about morality, but its handling of moral values is interesting. In the first part of the poem the moral standards of comedy are exploited for their humorous quality, while in the second half the traditional standards



are seriously urged. Ultimately both are useless. No matter which code he follows Tibullus is obviously doomed to be disillusioned and made to look absurd.

However there are a couple of poems in which Tibullus shows a straightforward respect for the values of traditional Roman morality. In poem 1.3, the nostalgic elegy from his sickbed in Corcyra, his thoughts drift over a range of subjects and he shows a deep feeling for his home, his family and the ancestral gods and holy rites of his country. Thus there is considerable filial piety in his desire to have his mother and sister close by him to perform his funeral rites (5-8) :

"abstineas, Mors atra, precor: non hic mihi mater  
quae legat in maestos ossa perusta sinus,  
non soror, Assyrios cineri quae dedat odores  
et fleat effusis ante sepulcra comis."

and there is similar piety towards the gods of his home in his prayer that he may return home to make them offerings (33-34) :

"at mihi contingat patrios celebrare Penates  
reddereque antiquo menstrua tura Lari."

This prayer leads him into a wistful picture of the Golden Age of the past,<sup>19</sup> when people lived happily with no ships, no trade, no boundaries, no strenuous agriculture and no war. He contrasts this with the horrors of the present age (49-50) :

"nunc Iove sub domino caedes et vulnera semper,  
nunc mare, nunc leti mille repente viae."

The details of his idyllic picture of the past are conventional and correspond closely to those of earlier Greek and contemporary Roman writers.<sup>20</sup> Although Tibullus does not present any specific causes for the downfall of man, there is a strong suggestion in 1.37ff that his own arrogance and greed are responsible for it. Man's ships had scorned the waves ("contempserat undas" 37) and sailors were motivated chiefly by greed for gain ("compendia" 39). The wickedness of seafaring is a commonplace of ancient literature, for as Smith points out, "Seafaring ... violates the law of nature and of the gods ... and is therefore impious."<sup>21</sup> There is also a hint that the violence of modern times may be a punishment for specific sacrileges against the gods and Tibullus protests his own innocence in 1.51-52 :

"parce, pater. timidum non me periuria terrent,  
non dicta in sanctos impia verba deos."

The most notable feature about this entire passage is the absence of witticisms. For once Tibullus is not using human greed and ancient times as subjects of fun.

Similarly his handling of the love motif in this poem is more serious than usual. There is none of the elaborate buffoonery typical of comedy and his picture of his homecoming to Delia (in spite of the discordant hint of her infidelity in 81-82) dwells on her chastity. He begs her urgently (83-84) :

"at tu casta precor maneat, sanctique pudoris  
adsideat custos sedula semper anus."

and pictures her sitting in the lamplight spinning. This activity was traditionally associated in Roman thought with feminine honour and constancy and Delia is thus lent an aura of virtue. Although morality is only of incidental importance in this poem, Tibullus's choice of subject matters hints at a profound sympathy with the traditional Roman devotion to home, family, country and household gods.

The brief and charming birthday poem addressed to Cornutus (2.2) also reflects an earnest approach to moral themes. Tibullus guesses shrewdly that his friend's birthday wish will be for his wife's true love. He assures Cornutus that the wish will be granted and adds his own prayer that the couple will be blessed with children.

The tone of the poem, though affectionate, is also reverential. Its subject matter - hallowed religious rites, prayer, faithful married love and the birth of children - is all quite serious and Tibullus employs a good deal of solemn moral terminology in the first half of the poem ("bona verba" (1), "pia tura" (3), "sanctas ... comas" (6) ). Moreover the structure of the poem is carefully contrived to emphasize the important theme of married love. The vivid description of the birthday rites in the first half of the poem acts as a preamble to the central couplet containing Cornutus's prayer, which Tibullus perceptively divines (11-12) :

"auguror, uxoris fides optabis amores;  
iam reor hoc ipse edidicisse deos."

The second half of the poem illustrates the fervour of this prayer and predicts its fulfilment. Tibullus asserts that Cornutus prefers his wife's love to all the wealth in the world, including the opulent jewellery of the East (13-16). This extravagant imagery is clearly intended to underline the intensity of Cornutus's love. However it also has the effect of suggesting subtly that Cornutus and his wife are indifferent to the charms of luxury and are committed instead to the simple life, symbolized by the traditional rituals performed earlier in the poem. Tibullus adds his own seal of approval to this simple lifestyle and its associated values with his closing prayer on behalf of the couple (21-22) :

"eveniat, Natalis, avis prolemque ministret,  
ludat et ante tuos turba novella pedes."

This is a thoroughly Roman sentiment and indeed the whole poem suggests a considerable sympathy with traditional Roman moral values.

In his treatment of private morality Tibullus borrows heavily both from comedy and from the traditional Roman moral code. The influence of comedy can be seen chiefly in his lively characterization and in the carefree moral nihilism of most of his "personae". The influence of traditional morality on his work is more subtle. Although he displays some genuine regard for the traditional moral

standards of devotion to family, country and household gods, Tibullus's use of traditional morality is primarily humorous. This can best be seen in his diatribes against moral decline. In these he makes extensive use of parody, borrowing many of the conventional moral sentiments of outrage and dismay at the wickedness of the age, but using them in contexts where they appear wholly absurd. Where modern times are concerned Tibullus reserves his genuine anger and disapproval for the horrors of war. It is in the sphere of the public career that he seriously challenges the validity of the aristocratic ideal and the traditional concept of moral decline, as the next chapter will seek to show.

Propertius borrows freely from both the moral code of comedy and the moral code of the Roman aristocracy with the result that there is considerable variation in the tone of his poems. The humorous element prevails in many of the poems which are centred around situations typical of comedy. However there are times when Propertius merely uses the stock scenes of a love affair as a starting point for serious moral statements. And there is a further group of poems in which he abandons most of the conventional trappings of a love affair and grapples with earnest moral questions.

The moral issues of Greek and Roman comedy are few and simple, since they arise generally out of the actions of typecast characters in stereotyped situations. The young lovers are generally jealous, the women fickle, flirtatious

and greedy, the rivals wealthy, thick-witted and brawny, and the bawds bawdy and corrupting.<sup>22</sup> The influence of the stock characters and motifs of comedy on Propertius's handling of morality can be readily detected in a number of poems where he plays out the standard comic themes of criticizing his mistress's extravagance, begging her to be more faithful and thrifty, and vilifying wealthy rivals. What passes for moral indignation in most of these poems is mere self-interested possessiveness. Propertius is frequently cuckolded, exploited and made to look foolish, but, undaunted, he retaliates with some splendid moral diatribes. The result is often quite humorous. It is worth noting, however, that the quality of Propertius's humour is wholly different from Ovid's. Unlike Ovid, Propertius never makes any gleeful attacks on conventional standards of private morality in his own "persona". Where Ovid's humour is mischievous and anarchic, Propertius's is rueful and sardonic and generally contains an undertone of disapproval.

The bawd who is undermining his mistress's morals in Poem 4.5 is a character rich in comic qualities, closely modelled on similar figures in Greek New Comedy and bearing some resemblance to certain courtesans in the plays of Plautus. A.A. Day comments, "the Acanthis and Dipsas of Propertius and Ovid are very probably direct literary descendants of the aged "lenae" of comedy, whose unlovely characteristics they have inherited."<sup>23</sup> Acanthis is a tippling practitioner of witchcraft, with a vast store of advice on how to exploit men. The chief piece of counsel

which she urges on her protégée is to flout the claims of morality and concentrate on amassing wealth (4.5.21-28) :

"Si te Eoa Dorozantem iuvat aurea ripa,  
 et quae sub Tyria concha superbit aqua,  
 Euripylisque placet Coae textura Minervae,  
 sectaque ab Attalicis putria signa toris,  
 seu quae palmiferae mittunt venalia Thebae,  
 murreaque in Parthis pocula cocta focis:  
 sperne fidem, provolve deos, mendacia vincant,  
 frange et damnosae iura pudicitiae!"

This is followed by a list of ruses for exploiting men as extensively as possible.<sup>24</sup> The nucleus of the bawd's argument is summed up with cynical brevity in a single line (53):

"aurum spectato, non quae manus afferrat aurum."

The intent of the poem is essentially farcical. The young man's love affair is likely to be made more difficult and expensive because of the **wiles** of the bawd. Hence it is exasperation rather than genuine moral indignation that prompts his outraged diatribe against her. We cannot and are surely not intended to take him seriously. He is deliberately playing the role of the stage lover, who is constantly outwitted and taken down by the unscrupulous characters who surround him. He may receive some sympathy from his audience, but he nevertheless remains a figure of fun. Similarly, the bawd is drawn with so much humorous attention to the details of speech and appearance that she is clearly intended to amuse rather than to shock. Her

attack on moral values may be reprehensible, but it is carried out with such impudence, blatancy and verve that it cannot seriously offend. The reaction Propertius seeks from his audience is one of amusement, not moral indignation.

Nevertheless the threat to moral values in the poem is extremely interesting. If the girl follows the bawd's advice, her moral collapse will consist of overthrowing fidelity, modesty and religion, and allowing falsehood to conquer. The motive for doing this is greed, born of a desire for luxury. The bawd appears as a corrupting influence. It is significant that this picture closely resembles far more serious accounts of moral decline elsewhere in Propertius's poetry.<sup>25</sup> Typically the symptoms of moral decline are the breakdown of "fides", "pudicitia" and respect for the gods. The cause of such breakdown is often greed, as in this poem, while the corrupting influences are various. Although Propertius's laments over the decadent state of morality in Rome may vary in mood, they do not vary greatly in substance.

The influence of comedy can also be seen in Propertius's handling of the themes of the rich rival and the girl's greed and extravagance. In love elegy, as in comedy, poverty is the hallmark of the young lover. Predictably, it is often associated with jealousy of wealthy rivals and anger and distress about the extravagance of girls. However in the works of Propertius these attitudes of jealousy, anger and distress frequently masquerade as moral fervour.



Thus his treatment of the rich rival and the greedy girl has an ambiguous tone - half serious, half amusing. The wry humour which is typical of the motif in comedy is retained, but it is accompanied by some semi-serious moralizing.

The variations of tone in his handling of this motif are readily apparent in his poems about the Illyrian praetor - 1.8 and 2.16. The first half of poem 1.8 is a complaint addressed to Cynthia, reproaching her for deserting Propertius and picturing in graphic detail the hazards she will have to endure if she accompanies her new lover to Illyria. The second half of the poem is a delighted hymn of rejoicing because the rich gifts of the Illyrian praetor have not succeeded in tempting her away from Propertius. For once Cynthia appears as a paragon, virtuously refusing to be led astray by money. Once again wealth appears as a corrupting influence and virtue lies in fidelity and readiness to live in a simple manner. Propertius lavishes praise on Cynthia for her noble lack of greed (1.8.32-38):

" .... sine me dulcia regna negat,  
 illa vel angusto mecum requiescere lecto  
 et quocumque modo maluit esse mea,  
 quam sibi dotatae regnum vetus Hippodamiae  
 et quas Elis opes ante pararat equis  
 quamvis magna daret, quamvis maiora daturus,  
 non tamen illa meos fugit avara sinus."

He adds that he has persuaded her to stay not by means of

wealth, but "blandi ... obsequio" (40). Apart from demonstrating the power of poetry, this comment serves to underline the purity of Cynthia's motives in remaining with Propertius. The poem is joyful, but contains little overt humour. Although he has no didactic purpose, Propertius upholds the classic Roman virtues of simplicity and fidelity. To a large extent the poem hinges on the triumph of these qualities over the corrupting force of wealth. Astonishingly, Cynthia is the heroine of this triumph.

However in 2.16 Cynthia's nobility has collapsed and, instead of being a moral heroine, she has become a villainess. Propertius's characterization of both the praetor and Cynthia in this poem owes something to the stock types of comedy and is enlivened by a streak of malicious humour. The praetor is brawny (27), gullible (8) and generous (44), while Cynthia is grasping, unscrupulous and callous. In lines 11-12 Propertius pays her a barbed compliment on her lack of concern for social prestige :

"Cynthia non sequitur fasces nec curat honores,  
semper amatorum ponderat una sinus."

Later in the poem he makes a number of morally loaded complaints against Cynthia, but his anguish is very stylized. He uses the central issue of her infidelity as a convenient peg on which to hang some extremely conventional motifs. Thus in 1.17-18 he complains about the extravagant gifts she demands from him :

"semper in Oceanum mittit me quaerere gemmas,  
et iubet ex ipsa tollere dona Tyro."

Once again, infidelity and love of luxury are the symptoms of moral decline. Contemplating them, Propertius yearns naively for a simpler society in which there would be no motive for girls to stray and he utters the pious wish (19-22) :

"atque utinam Romae nemo esset dives, et ipse  
straminea posset dux habitare casa!  
numquam venales essent ad munus amicae,  
atque una fieret cana puella domo."

The classic moral values of ancient Rome (symbolized by the straw hut which was its trademark) are upheld by Propertius, but it is evident that he stands in splendid moral isolation. The poem contains the unmistakable implication that Cynthia is not alone in shrugging off irksome moral standards. It is clear from 1.21 that she has many sisters in iniquity. The transition in these few lines (19-22) from describing a particular incident to making a sweeping general statement is typical of Propertius's poetic technique. Its chief effect is to make Cynthia appear as a typical product of her own society and age.<sup>26</sup>

The introduction of Antony (who is brought into the poem in line 36 as an example of "turpis amor") is possibly intended to serve the same purpose of generalizing Propertius's moral complaints. Cynthia's shamelessness in love is reflected on a larger scale and with far more serious consequences in Antony's behaviour. The moral conflict between Cynthia and Propertius thus appears as a microcosm of the moral conflict in the larger world of Roman society.<sup>27</sup>

But while Propertius is prepared to diagnose the ills of Roman society, he shows little interest in prescribing for them. The poem has no genuine didactic quality. Rather its primary aim is to present a graceful complaint about Cynthia's fickleness. It is highly unlikely that Propertius expects his reproofs and moral strictures to have any genuine reforming effect on her. They are far too tame. The most alarming admonition he can summon to terrify her back to the path of virtue is the warning that Jupiter may strike her with thunderbolts. The flimsiness of this argument is probably deliberate. It has the effect of underlining the hopelessness of Propertius's attack on immorality. Although he protests about the decadence of contemporary Rome, his complaints have an undertone of cynical resignation.

In all of the poems discussed so far, Propertius's moral outcries have been prompted not so much by any wide-ranging concern for the moral welfare of the Roman state as by purely personal jealousy. The humorous element predominates in these poems and Propertius himself resembles the slighted lover of comedy, suffering a sense of outrage and ineffectual distress. However there is another group of similar poems in which Propertius uses stock situations of comedy as a starting point for more serious criticisms of the state of private morality in Rome. The most important of these are poems 2.6, 1.16, 2.25, 2.32, 2.19 and 1.11. In several of these elegies Propertius states quite emphatically that moral standards in Rome have declined. It may be

useful to examine the objects of his criticism, the nature of the moral decline which he observes and the causes which he adduces to explain it.

In 2.6 Propertius uses the conventional motif of jealousy as a springboard for a violent attack on the lust and promiscuity in Rome. At the beginning of the poem he appears as a pathologically jealous lover, who manages to find a wide variety of targets for his rage. However he soon passes from the torments of his own life to an account of the disasters caused by these "vitia" in the past<sup>28</sup> and then goes on to describe the wickedness which has resulted in contemporary Rome (19-36) :

"cur exempla petam Graium? tu criminis auctor,  
 nutritus duro, Romule, lacte lupae: 20  
 tu rapere intactas docuisti impune Sabinas:  
 per te nunc Romae quidlibet audet Amor.  
 felix Admeti coniunx et lectus Ulixis,  
 et quaecumque viri femina limen amat!  
 templa Pudicitiae quid opus statuuisse puellis, 25  
 si cuivis nuptae quidlibet esse licet?  
 quae manus obscenas depinxit prima tabellas  
 et posuit casta turpia visa domo,  
 illa puellarum ingenuos corrumpit ocellos  
 nequitiaeque suae noluit esse rudes. 30  
 a gemat in terris ista qui protulit arte  
 iurgia sub tacita condita laetitia!  
 non istis olim variabant tecta figuris:  
 tum paries nullo crimine pictus erat,  
 sed non immerito! velavit aranea fanum 35  
 et mala desertos occupat herba deos."

Butler and Barber comment that "the whole elegy deals with the same theme, sc. the faithlessness of women",<sup>29</sup> but this is only partly true. The poem is certainly concerned with criticizing the promiscuity of Cynthia and of women in general, but this is not its only aim. Propertius is equally vehement in his denunciation of the unbridled lust of men.

As well as sketching the symptoms of moral decline, Propertius makes some attempt to identify its causes. The attack on Cynthia is a mere pretext for entering into a sweeping indictment of moral decadence in Rome. Propertius deplores the modern permissive society in which anything is allowed (lines 22 and 26), but he lays the blame for its existence at least as much on men as on women. With grim humour he even pictures the legendary hero Romulus as one of the villains in this drama of moral downfall, by presenting the hallowed legend of the rape of the Sabines from a new and sardonic angle. Romulus appears as an unfeeling bully, setting a wicked precedent of lust and violence. More seriously, Propertius denounces erotic artists for the corrupting influence of their works and points out primly that such lewd decorations did not exist in early times. There is a strong implication that people were more virtuous in those far off days.<sup>30</sup> He also implies that the lapse in moral standards has been caused in part by a decline in religious observance (35). Whether or not Propertius believed in the gods, he clearly felt that religion provided a valuable set of social sanctions, which might be useful

for restraining women's lust. The moral standards which he upholds are those of the traditional Roman code, with its firm insistence on simple living, religious observance and chastity. Propertius evidently wanted his own relationship with Cynthia to meet these severe, traditional standards of fidelity, for he talks about their love in terms more appropriate to a marriage, assuring Cynthia that (41-42) :

"nos uxor numquam, numquam seducet amica:

semper amica mihi, semper et uxor eris."

In rejecting these values Cynthia appears once again as a typical product of her own society. Propertius's chief intention in the poem is to denounce the wickedness of that society.

His attacks on the moral corruption of contemporary Rome are often linked with nostalgic contemplation of the purity of early times. Thus in poem 1.16, the paraclausithyron, the house door recalls the chastity of ancient times (1-2) :

"Quae fueram magnis olim patefacta triumphis,

ianua Tarpeiae nota pudicitiae"

and bitterly contrasts it with the present dishonourable behaviour in the household (5-12) :

"nunc ego, nocturnis pоторum saucia rixis,

5

pulsata indignis saepe queror manibus,

et mihi non desunt turpes pendere corollae

semper et exclusis signa iacere faces.

nec possum infamæ dominae defendere noctes,

nobilis obscenis tradita carminibus;

10

(nec tamen illa suae revocatur parcere famae,  
turpior et saeculi vivere luxuria.)"

Once again promiscuity and luxury are the symptoms of moral decline and they are shown as typical of the age (12).

There is no humour in the poem. The contrast between the virtue of early Rome and the vice of modern Rome is seriously and forcefully drawn. In presenting the scandalous behaviour typical of modern Rome, Propertius uses striking illustrations, rather than relying on colourless assertions of immorality. Thus the picture of the rowdy lovers brawling drunkenly, dropping their torches and scrawling graffiti on the door evokes a vivid atmosphere of decadence. The charges of immorality which the door heaps on its mistress in this introductory passage also serve a useful purpose within the framework of the poem, apart from their intrinsic interest as moral commentaries, for they help to win sympathy for the slighted lover.

There is a similar nostalgia for the past and disapproval of the present in poem 2.25, where Propertius sees himself as a rebel against the widespread customs of his own day. He defiantly proclaims his respect for the traditional standards of fidelity and his determination to resist the common practices of his own time (35-38) :

"at si saecula forent antiquis grata puellis,  
essem ego quod nunc tu: tempore vincor ego.  
non tamen ista meos mutabunt saecula mores:  
unus quisque sua noverit ire via."



The poem is a loosely constructed set of observations on love, with no true unity of theme or structure.

Propertius's comments on the immorality of his own times are awkwardly inserted in the middle of some trite sermonizing on love and have no real connection with the rest of the poem.

In poem 2.32 Propertius's description of the moral laxity of his own times is far better integrated into the body of the poem. After voicing some familiar complaints about Cynthia's infidelity, he makes a rare attempt to show comprehension and tolerance by excusing Cynthia's behaviour on the grounds of precedent among the Greeks and, more significantly, the Romans. He comments (41-52) :

"an quisquam in tanto stuprorum examine quaerit  
     'Cur haec tam dives? quis dedit? unde dedit?'  
 o nimium nostro felicem tempore Romam,  
     si contra mores una puella facit!  
 haec eadem ante illam iam impune et Lesbia facit:     45  
     quae sequitur, certe est invidiosa minus.  
 qui quaerit Tatios veteres duosque Sabinos,  
     hic posuit nostra nuper in urbe pedem.  
 tu prius et fluctus poteris siccare marinos,  
     altaque mortali deligere astra manu,             50  
 quam facere, ut nostrae nolint peccare puellae:  
     hic mos Saturno regna tenente fuit."

This passage contains a distinct implication that there has been a decline from the rigid moral standards of the

ancient Sabines to the casual immorality of present day Rome. Once again the decline is characterized by illicit sex ("stuprum", 41) and venality in love (42). Propertius does not adduce any causes to account for this and indeed he suggests that humans and gods have always been faithless in love (1.31-40, 1.52-60).<sup>31</sup> Although he attempts to maintain a tone of sophisticated tolerance in the poem, his own sympathies clearly lie with the early Sabines, for he says that Rome would be "nimium ... felicem" if a single girl resisted the present practices (43-44). This comment also shows how widespread he believed the decadence in Rome to be. His purpose in describing it is somewhat ambiguous. The ostensible intention of the latter half of the poem is to encourage Cynthia to follow her desires in a carefree fashion, untrammelled by Propertius's criticisms. However its real effect is rather different. By punctuating the long catalogue of amorous adventuresses with wistful and pathetic comments (1.43-44; 47; 55-56), Propertius makes it unmistakably clear that he regrets the passing of the old customs. The poem thus emerges more as a lament for chastity than a charter for free love.

It is clear that Propertius saw many features of contemporary Roman life as a scented trap designed for brutal ambushes on chastity.<sup>32</sup> Thus in the poem just discussed (2.32), Cynthia's journeys to Praeneste (3) and Tibur (5) take on a sinister quality, for as Propertius flatly accuses a few lines later (17) :

" ... ista tui furtum via monstrat amoris."

Drives in the country are not the only activity which Propertius views as a dangerous opportunity for sexual frolics. In 2.19 he admits that, although he is sorry at her absence, he is pleased that Cynthia has chosen the country for her holiday, since it offers so few occasions for misbehaviour (3-4) :

"nullus erit castis iuvenis corruptor in agris,  
qui te blanditiis non sinat esse probam."

In tones of relief he mentions some of the corrupting influences of the city which will be absent there (9-10) :

"illic te nulli poterunt corrumpere ludi,  
fanaque peccatis plurima causa tuis." <sup>33</sup>

Propertius's grim, custodial attitude towards Cynthia is not redeemed by any glimmer of humour. And in spite of his self righteous, chiding tone, he shows little evidence of possessing any genuine moral scruples. His attempts to browbeat Cynthia into a state of chastity are motivated by simple possessiveness. Similarly in 1.11.15-16 he complains about the corrupting influence of Baiae and admits that he is afraid lest :

"ut solet amoto labi custode puella  
perfida, communes nec meminisse deos."

Here, as elsewhere,<sup>34</sup> the gods appear as supernatural gaolers, supplementing Propertius's own custodial role, but less efficient in his absence. He ends the poem by advising Cynthia to leave the place (27-30) :

"tu modo quam primum corruptas desere Baias:  
multis ista dabunt litora discidium,

*litora quae fuerunt castis inimica puellis:*

*a pereant Baiae, crimen amoris, aquae!"*

As always, the disaster he fears most is a lapse from chastity.

The most remarkable feature about all of the poems so far discussed is their narrow obsession with a single aspect of private morality - the virtue of fidelity. This can be explained in part by the dictates of the genre in which Propertius wrote. To a very large extent the love elegists limited themselves to describing the various aspects of a typical love affair. Within this restricted framework fidelity was relevant, but there was little scope or reason for discussing other aspects of private morality. Yet, even within the narrow framework of love elegy, Propertius draws on the traditional moral standards of the Roman aristocracy to a remarkable extent.

The moral code of the Roman aristocracy prescribed marriage, fidelity, frugality and child care for the Roman woman. As further evidence of her virtue, she could work in wool and avoid wild parties. A virtuous man was expected to distinguish himself in the army and in public office, to marry and have children and to keep his name free of scandal. In theory at least, he was supposed to refrain from bribery and malpractice in his political career. In both man and woman simplicity of life style was one of the legendary symptoms of rampant virtue. At first glance these

standards seem an unpromising source of material for a writer of love elegy. Nevertheless Propertius borrows enthusiastically, if selectively, from the traditional moral concepts of the Roman aristocracy. Even in his elegies to Cynthia, he insists vigorously on the importance of the classic virtues of fidelity and simplicity of lifestyle. And in a small group of poems he breaks out of the conventions of love elegy to sing the praises of the rare women who preserve the ancient standards of virtue.

Thus in poem 3.12 Propertius praises the virtue of Aelia Galla in glowing terms. The elegy is interesting not only for its commendation of Galla's fine moral qualities, but also for its innuendoes against her husband, Postumus. Propertius criticizes Postumus bitterly for his hard-hearted willingness to leave Galla and go off to war. It is significant that Propertius presents Postumus's motivation for this as greed for spoil rather than patriotic fervour. He exclaims in exasperation (3.12.5-6) :

"si fas est, omnes pariter pereatis avari,  
et quisquis fido praetulit arma toro!"

By implication Postumus's decision to leave his wife and go on military service is seen as a breach of the devotion required by the bond of "fides" between man and woman.<sup>35</sup> Undoubtedly Livy or Sallust would have been appalled at such an interpretation of the conduct of a young man serving his country, but warfare is one field where the moral outlook of the love elegists diverges sharply from that of the historians.<sup>36</sup>

This exasperated criticism of Postumus is followed by a dazzling portrait of the incorruptible Galla. Propertius assures Postumus severely that he does not deserve such a good wife (1.15-22) :

"ter quater in casta felix, o Postume, Galla!  
 moribus his alia coniuge dignus eras.  
 quid faciet nullo munita puella timore,  
 cum sit luxuriae Roma magistra suae?  
 sed securus eas: Gallam non munera vincent,  
 duritiaeque tuae non erit illa memor.  
 nam quocumque die salvum te fata remittent,  
 pendebit collo Galla pudica tuo."

This passage contains some extremely interesting points. In the first place it shows that the "fides" which Propertius so enthusiastically promulgated is conceived as involving mutual obligations. Galla's chastity deserves to win reciprocal devotion from her husband, who is shown as unworthy of such a moral paragon. She is superior to him not only in her greater devotion, but also in her immunity to the attractions of wealth. Galla is too strong to succumb to the temptation of "munera" (19) but Postumus is going to war in search of wealth. Secondly the passage reveals that Propertius considered Rome to be a dangerous place for most unguarded women, since money might well corrupt their virtue. The prison-like implications of the language he uses - "munita puella timore" (17) - are unpleasantly typical of his poetry and particularly apt in the circumstances. "Munita" is a military term and Propertius implies that

Postumus the soldier, instead of going off to besiege cities in the East, should stay at home and fortify his own property (Galla) against attack.

The moral standards reflected in this poem are remarkable, since they break away in many important points from the established codes of morality. The tone of the poem is serious and the moral issues in it are handled far more thoughtfully than would be customary in comedy. However Propertius also rejects emphatically some of the most cherished notions of the traditional Roman moral code. Although he eulogizes Galla, who bears a close resemblance to the virtuous Roman matrons of legend (she is both chaste and frugal), he stigmatizes Postumus, who is also following the traditional Roman code by performing his military service. In place of the dedication to the Roman army which the aristocracy demanded and glorified with a moral halo, Propertius prescribes dedication to a woman and imbues it with the same moral radiance.

Poem 4.3, which purports to be a letter from "Arethusa" to her soldier husband "Lycotas",<sup>37</sup> is very similar in content and sentiment. The portrait of Arethusa which emerges from this poem marks her as a virtuous Roman wife of the old school. She works in wool (33-34) which is traditionally a sign of feminine virtue, she is faithful to her absent husband (56), she is punctilious about religious observance (57ff) and she rejects the charms of luxury in Lycotas's absence (51-52) :

"nam mihi quo Poenis nunc purpura fulgeat ostris  
crystallusque meas ornet aquosa manus?"

However the characterization of Lycotas is more subtle. He appears partly as a renegade lover, who has gone off to war, but still has the standard lover's physique ("teneros ... lacertos" (23) and "imbelles ... manus" (24) ), but he also appears very willing to go to war. Readiness to fight for Rome, was one of the traditional signs of virtue in a Roman man, but in this elegy Lycotas is severely criticized for displaying it. It is true that this criticism is not spoken directly by Propertius, but is put into the mouth of Arethusa. However it tallies so closely with statements which Propertius makes elsewhere in his own right<sup>38</sup> that it seems reasonable to suppose that he is using Arethusa as a mouthpiece for his own views. Throughout his poetry Propertius constantly stresses the importance of "fides" and urges that the claims of love should be placed before all else.<sup>39</sup> Arethusa adheres to this ideal and rebukes Lycotas for falling short of it. After recalling his campaigns abroad she demands bitterly (4.3.11) :

"haecne marita fides .... ?"

Moreover she begs him not to care too much about glory and plunder (63-64) :

"ne, precor, ascensis tanti sit gloria Bactris,  
raptave odorato carbasa lina duci."

Via Arethusa, Propertius thus deplores and discourages the very qualities and ambitions which the traditional Roman



moral code applauded in men. However there is nothing to suggest that he disapproves of Arethusa's behaviour. She displays many of the traditional Roman virtues - fidelity, piety, simplicity - but these are all qualities which Propertius heartily endorses elsewhere.<sup>40</sup> Thus he is in the rather anomalous position of approving the role prescribed by the aristocratic Roman moral code for women, while heartily detesting and rejecting the role which it prescribed for men.

Propertius has drawn an even more significant full-length portrait of a virtuous Roman woman in his elegy on the death of Cornelia (4.11). The poem might well serve as a perfect blueprint for the life of an aristocratic Roman woman. From the wedding torch to the funeral torch Cornelia displays all the attributes of nobility and virtue. Her claims to honour are typical of those engraved on the tombstones of noble Roman women for several centuries.<sup>41</sup> It is clear that Propertius had such epitaphs in mind in composing the poem, for in line 36 Cornelia says:

"in lapide hoc uni nupta fuisse legar."

However this was not the only force which shaped Propertius's handling of the subject of Cornelia's life. The poem also bears a close resemblance to the "laudationes" spoken at funerals in praise of the deceased person. These speeches contained an account of the dead person's achievements and were normally spoken by a close relative. However Propertius takes the imaginative step of making the dead Cornelia speak

for herself. Her speech is modelled on the defence of an accused person on trial. She first makes the assertion that she has not died an early death through any guilt of her own (17) and she then proceeds to demonstrate her innocence by describing the virtuous life she has led. This description corresponds closely in its details to the traditional funeral "laudatio" of an aristocratic Roman woman. Cornelia's claims to honour include the glory won by her ancestors in warfare (29ff), the public offices of her family, including the consulship held by her brother (66) and the censorship held by her husband (67), the proud boast that she was "univira" (36), her chastity and unimpeachable virtue (43-46). Moreover she had three children, whom she was bringing up carefully to follow the same pattern of behaviour (67ff) and she was devoted to her husband and family. Her proudest boast is that she lived in every way worthily of her ancestors, as she calls upon them to witness (37-48) :

"testor maiorum cineres tibi, Roma, colendos,  
sub quorum titulis, Africa, tunsā iaces,  
et Persen proavo stimulantem pectus Achille,  
quique tuas proavo fregit Achille domos, 40  
me neque censurae legem mollisse neque ulla  
labe mea vestros erubuisse focos.  
non fuit exuviis tantis Cornelia damnum:  
quin et erat magnae pars imitanda domus.  
nec mea mutata est aetas, sine crimine tota est; 45  
viximus insignes inter utramque facem.  
mi natura dedit leges a sanguine ductas,  
nec possis melior iudicis esse metu."

She points out that through her virtue she has won the greatest reward a woman can win - a fine reputation (71-72):

"haec est feminei merces extrema triumphii,  
laudat ubi emeritum libera fama rogum."

Then after some tender personal messages to her family, she ends with the triumphant statement (101-102) :

"moribus et caelum patuit : sim digna merendo,  
cuius honoratis ossa vehantur avis."

Propertius does not intrude on the poem to make any moral statements in his own right, but it may be reasonably assumed that he heartily applauded Cornelia's behaviour. The tone of the elegy is serious and it contains not the slightest hint of any mockery or disparagement of the virtuous life which it describes. The position of the elegy is also highly significant, since it is Propertius's final poem. It is extremely interesting that the last impression he chooses to leave with his reader is a portrait of a noble and virtuous woman, who throughout her life has energetically upheld the traditional Roman standards of morality. It is a startling final image for a writer of love elegy and it suggests that Propertius had considerable sympathy for those standards.

Propertius's other main area of concern in the field of private morality is money. Like feminine virtue, this is sometimes treated in an almost farcical manner.<sup>42</sup> but there are two intensely serious poems in which Propertius

denounces greed and deplures its effects. The first of these is poem 3.7, where Propertius takes the opportunity offered by the death of a friend, Paetus, to make a vigorous attack on greed. F. Robertson, in a perceptive article on this poem, comments: "Paetus is represented as responsible for his own death: if his ideals had been different he would still be alive. He serves as an illustration of the consequences of greed, and this fact is not lost sight of at any point; it is hammered home at regular intervals."<sup>43</sup>

The poem begins with an apostrophe to money, accusing it of ruining people's lives (3.7.1-4) :

"Ergo sollicitae tu causa, pecunia, vitae!  
per te immaturum mortis adimus iter;  
tu vitiis hominum crudelia pabula praebes;  
semina curarum de capite orta tua."

The use of the word "vitiis" constitutes an implicit criticism of Paetus, who has died as a direct result of his quest for money. There is a flashback to the picture of the drowning Paetus, followed by a denunciation of seafaring (29ff.), which in ancient literature is usually synonymous with arrogance or wickedness.<sup>44</sup> This is followed by an address to Paetus, which contains implications of disloyalty to hearth and home (33-34) :

"ancora te teneat, quem non tenuere Penates?  
quid meritum dicas, cui sua terra parum est?"

and this criticism is further strengthened by the comment in 1.37 :

"natura insidians pontum substravit avaris."

Propertius outlines what Paetus should have done in 1.43ff. :

"quod si contentus patrio bove verteret agros,  
verbaque duxisset pondus habere mea,  
viveret ante suos dulcis conviva Penates,  
pauper, at in terra nil nisi fleret opes."

Then, after an unpleasantly realistic evocation of Paetus's death and a graceful reproach to the sea nymphs for failing to help him, Propertius ends by assuring the fierce North Wind that he will never go to sea, since he prefers to remain "iners" (72) with his mistress.

This is an interesting poem, which presents a number of puzzling points. Even its literary intentions have been the subject of some debate.<sup>45</sup> Robertson comments shrewdly on the nature of the poem : "I suggest that the terms epicedium and lament are misleading and divert attention from the real meaning and intention of the poem.

As to what that meaning is, there can be no reasonable doubt. The poem is a tirade against greed and its effects."<sup>46</sup>

The poem undoubtedly has a strong didactic slant. Propertius makes a series of morally charged statements about greed, interspersed with vivid pictures of the terrible fate of Paetus, who had ignored Propertius's good advice (44). Thus Paetus is made to serve as a frightening

object lesson on the deserts of greed. As well as criticizing greed, Propertius incorporates into the poem the complementary theme of being contented with a modest way of life. In this respect the elegy resembles some of Horace's satires.<sup>47</sup> However it is difficult to identify precisely the sources of the moral attitudes in this elegy, since Propertius seems to have done some eclectic borrowing from other genres. With its rejection of wealth, its suspicious distrust of seafaring and its affectionate regard for the "Penates" and the family farm, the poem displays some of the moral notions usually found in the works of the historians. But Propertius's good advice about ploughing paternal fields (43) seems to be robbed of some of its conviction by his final picture of himself as the lazy lover (72) :

"ante fores dominae condar oportet iners."

Even more startling are the inconsistencies in his portrait of Paetus, who in line 16 is one of the "sancti", but in line 37 seems to be one of the "avari". Moreover he is called "pauper" in line 46, but shortly afterwards is pictured reclining in a bed of opulent splendour (49-50).<sup>48</sup> Propertius's point of view shifts rapidly in this poem, so that there is no completely consistent set of moral standards reflected in it. The only moral point on which he is adamant is that greed is wicked and leads to disaster.

Poem 3.13 is an even more impassioned attack on wealth and its corrupting influence. In this case

Propertius's complaints about wealth spring from his weary disapproval of the fickle, mercenary attitudes of Roman women in his own times. The poem does not appear to be inspired by outrage at a specific instance of infidelity on the part of Cynthia. Rather it is a general indictment of Rome (and in particular Roman women) in his time. He begins by posing the question (1-2) :

"Quaeritis, unde avidis nox sit pretiosa puellis,  
et Venerem exhaustae damna querantur opes."

to which he himself supplies the answer (3-4) :

"certa quidem tantis causa et manifesta ruinis:  
luxuriae nimium libera facta via est."

He goes on to enumerate the luxuries which are so numerous and so potent that they would shake even the scorn of a Penelope (9-10). Then, after describing the shameless behaviour of Roman matrons, he pictures wistfully the very different practices of India, where women throw themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres, so great is their devotion. He comments sadly that in Rome things are different (1.23-24) :

"hac genus infidum nuptarum, hic nulla puella  
nec fida Evadne nec pia Penelope."

This leads him to think of the early days when lovers gave only simple presents and lived an idyllically happy existence, in harmony with nature and the gods (25-46). Now, in contrast, religious observance has disappeared and men worship gold instead of the gods (47-50) :

"at nunc desertis cessant sacraria lucis:

aurum omnes victa iam pietate colunt,

auro pulsa fides, auro venalia iura,

aurum lex sequitur, mox sine lege pudor."

After listing some of the atrocities committed for the sake of wealth, he reaches the climax of his message

(59-66) :

"proloquar: - atque utinam patriae sim verus haruspex! -

frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis. 60

certa loquor, sed nulla fides; neque enim Ilia quondam

verax Pergameis Maenas habenda malis:

sola Parim Phrygiae fatum componere, sola

fallacem patriae serpere dixit equum.

ille furor patriae fuit utilis, ille parenti: 65

experta est veros irrita lingua deos."

This is an extremely significant poem. From the starting point of a very trite complaint about the rapacity of women who have a lover in their clutches, Propertius embarks on a general indictment of Roman society. Most of the poem is taken up by his criticism of the shameless venality of women and his laments for the vanished simplicity of the past, but from line 47 onwards he engages in a spirited attack on Roman society, which has rejected the gods and the traditional moral values of "pietas", "fides", "iura", "lex" and "pudor". These are the very qualities which Livy so resoundingly praises and whose disappearance in contemporary Rome he



so bitterly regrets. Like Livy, Propertius attributes their disappearance to the pestilential spread of luxury. These are qualities which are only marginally relevant to a love affair, but which are of central importance in the traditional moral code of Roman society. The mere fact that they are introduced into the poem at all clearly indicates the seriousness of the poet's purpose. In this diatribe Propertius transcends the exasperation of the maltreated lover and takes on the mantle of a prophet of doom for an entire society. It is very significant that he compares himself to Cassandra, who prophesied the downfall of a rich and powerful city, but was mocked and disbelieved by her contemporaries. The city of Troy had very strong emotional connotations for a Roman audience, both as a symbol of utter destruction and as the legendary cradle of the Roman people. Rome itself was sometimes referred to by writers as the "new Troy" and Propertius's reference to the fate of the original Troy thus takes on a sinister quality in this poem. Now, he suggests, the new Troy will imitate the old, not in its splendour, but in its terrible fate. And, like Cassandra, he is powerless to save his "patria" from utter ruin. The Trojan analogy thus hammers home the appalling scope and finality of Rome's moral downfall in Propertius's view.

Propertius's discussions of private morality are narrow in scope, being chiefly concerned with the moral issues stemming from a love affair, but they display a

range of handling and tone. Until the time of Catullus, love had always been treated as a light-hearted activity in Latin literature, having scant connection with morality in any form other than the farcical diatribes springing from lovers' tiffs, empty purses and jealous rages. In several poems Propertius adopts a humorous attitude to moral issues, but in many of his elegies (particularly the later ones in Books 3 and 4), he transcends the burlesque approach of comedy and preaches instead a love founded on grave moral, social and religious sanctions. At times the dividing line between the two types of poem is tenuous and blurred. His denunciations of the corrupting influences in contemporary Rome - such as theatres, temples, seaside resorts, fast carriages, expensive clothes and wealthy young men - are sometimes tinged with cynical humour and at other times are intensely serious. But, whatever the tone of his poems, he shows considerable consistency in his analysis of the moral sickness of Rome. Again and again he identifies unchastity and venality as the primary symptoms of moral decline and blames wealth for corrupting women's morals. As a natural consequence of his obsession with creating a close, exclusive love relationship, Propertius's discussions of private morality centre primarily around the virtue of fidelity. It is a virtue to which he is a slavish factotum, performing the services of gaoler, high priest and propagandist. Allied with this dedication to fidelity is a passionate enthusiasm for simplicity of lifestyle. This is most apparent

in his nostalgic pictures of early society, which he presents as a paradise for simple, faithful lovers. However in the later books this escapism gives place to an increasingly serious treatment of morality and Propertius takes a strong didactic stand on the moral issues of greed and venality, which he sees as serious threats to the welfare of Rome. More than either of the other love elegists he is in sympathy with the legendary moral standards of the past. Although he makes a conscientious effort to display the "nequitia" expected of a lover, his work nevertheless enshrines many of the traditional Roman virtues praised by the historians. It is not primarily in the sphere of private morality that Propertius rejects the aristocratic ideal and the traditional version of moral decline, but rather in his handling of the public career.

The aristocratic moral ideal and the traditional concept of moral decline have an important influence on Ovid's love poetry, even though this contains no explicit diatribes against contemporary moral decadence. The fact is that Ovid uses the aristocratic moral ideal as the basis for most of his humour. Although he attempts to safeguard himself by repeated assurances that his poetry is intended not for women of the aristocracy but for freed women (Am. 2.1.3, A.A. 1.31, 3.57-58, 3.611ff, R.A. 386), he nevertheless makes lavish and farcical use of many of the moral prescriptions of the traditional aristocratic

code. Indeed the love poems can be seen as an elaborate game in which Ovid sets out to present himself and his other characters as embodiments of most of the traditional symptoms of moral decadence. This game takes several forms. Sometimes Ovid mocks or parodies traditional moral values and institutions and uses serious moral terminology in contexts where it seems absurd. Elsewhere he approves and advises behaviour that is wicked, outrageous or undignified by traditional moral standards and takes pride in his own vices. And, except on rare occasions, he heartily approves the moral (or immoral) customs of his own age.

The first major assault on aristocratic standards of private morality comes in Amores 1.3. In this poem Ovid presents the girl with his credentials as a lover and urges her to accept him (Am 1.3.5-14) :

"accipe, per longos tibi qui deserviat annos;	5
accipe, qui pura norit amare fide!	
si me non veterum commendant magna parentum	
nomina, si nostri sanguinis auctor eques,	
nec meus innumeris renovatur campus aratris,	
temperat et sumptus parcus uterque parens	10
at Phoebus comitesque novem vitisque repertor	
hac faciunt, et me qui tibi donat, Amor,	
et nulli cessura fides, sine crimine mores	
nudaque simplicitas purpureusque pudor."	

An examination of these arguments yields some interesting results. In effect Ovid is saying that although he has no technical claim to aristocracy he does possess the traditional aristocratic virtues of "fides", "sine crimine mores", "simplicitas" and "pudor". And not only that. He possesses them in such lavish abundance that his "fides" is greater than anyone else's ("nulli cessura") and his "pudor" is positively blushing ("purpureusque pudor"). His choice of language here is highly suggestive and it recalls the traditional moral terminology used in aristocratic funeral "elogia" and historiography.<sup>49</sup>

However aristocratic claims to pre-eminent "fides" are usually made in connection with more honourable activities than a worthless love affair, and blushing modesty is an aristocratic virtue usually more admired in women than in men. Used in such an undignified context as this, they take on a quality of pure bathos. It is quite clear that this is no accident. After making these aristocratic virtues seem ridiculous by presenting them in the absurd context of a love affair and preening himself as their champion, Ovid completes the destruction of their dignity in the later poems. "Fides" is frequently perjured (Am. 2.8.18, 3.3.1, A.A. 1.644, 1.740) and "pudor" is humourously mocked and vilified (Am. 1.2.32, 1.3.35, 2.4.12, A.A. 1.496, 1.608, 2.251, 2.720), while "simplicitas" is usually mentioned with ironic condescension (Am. 1.11.10, 2.4.18) and Ovid's "sine crimine mores" are shown as liberal enough to include lies, trickery, perjury and adultery.<sup>50</sup> Evidently his claims to the possession of

traditional virtues have a very dubious foundation.

The impression that Ovid is mocking the aristocratic ideal is confirmed by an examination of his treatment of the gods. Traditional versions of the ideal society generally include profound devotion to the gods as one of their features and a decline in religious worship appears as one of the classic symptoms of moral decline. However Ovid's love poetry shows a startling departure from traditional religious sentiment. His approach to the gods is marked by a humour which takes various forms, including a lavish pretence of obsequious reverence, a chummy air of conspiracy and an urbane philosophical stand. Whichever attitude he adopts, he invariably shows a complete lack of traditional "pietas".

In poem 1.7 Ovid makes a show of extravagant remorse for striking his mistress, exclaiming (Am. 1.7.5-6) :

"tunc ego vel caros potui violare parentes  
saeva vel in sanctos verbera ferre deos!"

This agonized statement that he is capable of sacrilege might indicate devout reverence for the gods,<sup>51</sup> but it seems to me highly improbable that it does so. Far from suffusing his relationship to the girl with supernal reverence, the statement has the effect of equating sacrilegious violence towards the gods with a lovers' brawl. Evidence of Ovid's basically farcical intentions

comes from his witty asides (lines 32, 48) and the anti-climax of the poem's ending.

An equally irreverent approach to the gods appears in Amores 3.1, although its form is very different. On this occasion Ovid abandons any pretence of reverence and vaunts Elegy's services as companion and procurer to the goddess Venus (Am. 3.1.43-44) :

"rustica sit sine me lascivi mater Amoris;  
huic ego proveni lena comesque deae."

Such a claim must have had a horrific impact on any traditional moralist. Not only was Venus revered as the mother of Aeneas, the legendary founder of the Roman race and the Julian clan (a legendary connection which Augustus did much to encourage), but under the name of Venus Verticordia she was worshipped by Roman matrons as a goddess of chastity.<sup>52</sup> To present her as the pupil of a "lena" (a word carrying connotations of sordid brothels and total moral abandonment)<sup>53</sup> thus appears as a gross affront to traditional moral sentiment.

A similarly outrageous lack of respect for the gods appears in Amores 3.3. In this poem Ovid mulls over the problem of whether or not the gods can possibly exist in view of the vast amount of feminine perjury which goes unpunished by heaven, then reasons that if there are gods they must side with women and finally concludes that if he were a god he would do likewise. The whole poem

with its mock philosophical speculation is light-hearted and amusing, but the crowning absurdity comes in Ovid's decision that he too as a god would allow women to swear falsely (Am. 3.3.43-46) :

"si deus ipse forem, numen sine fraude liceret  
femina mendaci falleret ore meum;  
ipse ego iurarem verum iurare puellas  
et non de tetricis dicerer esse deus."

"Tetricus" is a rare word, but it is one associated with traditional standards of chastity and virtue. Ovid himself uses it elsewhere to describe the morality of the Sabines (Am. 3.8.61), as does Livy (1.18.4). In effect then he is saying that even if he were a god he would still be bent on escaping from the gloomy prison of traditional morality. Moreover he suggests that religious worship is motivated by "stulta ... credulitate" (Am. 3.3.24) and that men should have more courage than to place incense on altars (Am. 3.3.33-34). The entire poem thus constitutes a humorous attack on traditional piety.

An even more provocative challenge to traditional religious sentiment appears in Ovid's famous advice on perjury in A.A. 1.631ff. He begins by generously inviting the lover to forswear himself in the name of any god he pleases and adds that Jupiter is indulgent to perjury, having practised it so often himself (A.A. 1.635-6). Then comes Ovid's notorious comment (A.A. 1.637) :

"expedit esse deos et ut expedit esse putemus."



It can be argued that the urbane cynicism of this is softened by the advice on religious observance which follows it (A.A. 1.633-642):<sup>54</sup>

" dentur in antiquos tura merumque focos;  
nec secura quies illos similisque sopori  
detinet; innocue vivite : numen adest; 640  
reddite depositum; pietas sua foedera servet:  
fraus absit; vacuas caedis habete manus."

Nevertheless it does not seem to me that this passage constitutes any sort of recantation of Ovid's disparagement of religious belief. On the contrary, although it serves to show that Ovid is not advising any serious wrongdoing, the passage implies that traditional religious sanctions are hollow. The renewed advice on perjury which comes after it (A.A. 1.643ff) confirms Ovid's humorous intention. It is quite clear that the whole passage is basically subversive and is intended to undermine traditional religious sentiment.

Ovid is equally subversive in his approach to the traditional feminine virtues. Aristocratic moral sentiment approved the woman who was faithful, frugal, austere and expert in the skills of spinning and household management, but Ovid travesties these virtues unmercifully. The most extensive attack on the aristocratic ideal of feminine virtue appears in Amores 1.8, an elegy which shows a heavy debt to comedy. The bawd Dipsas in a spate of roguish advice demolishes almost all the traditional

moral precepts for women and distorts the rest. When her pupil blushes at her comments Dipsas is quick to turn this to advantage, lecturing her on the value of "pudor" (Am. 1.8.35-36)

"erubuit. decet alba quidem pudor ora, sed iste,  
si simules, prodest; verus obesse solet."

She then brushes aside the ancient standards of chastity and urges pleasure instead (Am. 1.8.39-44 ):

"forsitan inmundae Tatio regnante Sabinae  
noluerint habiles pluribus esse viris;  
nunc Mars externis animos exercet in armis,  
at Venus Aeneae regnat in urbe sui.

Iudunt formosae; casta est quam nemo rogavit -  
aut, si rusticitas non vetat, ipsa rogat."

Modesty, chastity and traditional virtue are not the only casualties in this onslaught. Noble ancestry is treated with equal contempt and Dipsas advises her pupil not to be impressed by it (Am. 1.8.65-66) :

"nec te decipiant veteres circum atria cerae.  
tolle tuos tecum, pauper amator, avos!"

Greed, caprice, deceit and infidelity are all counselled as sensible behaviour for a girl and Dipsas winds up her speech with a sententious claim to her ward's gratitude (1.105-108).

This lecture provokes shock and amusement not only because of its astonishing reversal of traditional moral precepts, but also because of the didactic form in which

this appears. Such a form is normally associated with exhortations to virtue not vice. Consequently its use as a weapon for attacking traditional morality is unexpected and doubles the humorous impact of Dipsas's maxims. Nor does Ovid, hiding behind doors and spying, really appear as any more virtuous than the bawd. Although he claims to be outraged almost to the point of violence by her speech (Am. 1.8.110-112), his fury is obviously due to fear that his own love affair (the so-called "thalamos ... pudicos", 19)<sup>55</sup> will be made more difficult, rather than to any genuine moral fervour. The whole poem appears as a sparkling hit and run attack on traditional morality in which feminine virtue is left for dead.

Nor are the virtuous activities associated with the feminine ideal any more respectfully treated. Ovid is particularly hard on the blameless feminine skill of working in wool. In A.A. 2.217ff. he certainly recommends it, but the context is startling. He is addressing men not women and as part of his counsel for winning success in love he advises them to imitate the obedience of Hercules the spinster (A.A. 2.217-222) :

"ille, fatigata praebendo monstra noverca  
 qui meruit caelum, quod prior ipse tulit,  
 inter Ioniacas calathum tenuisse puellas  
 creditur, et lanas excoluisse rudes.  
 paruit imperio dominae Tirynthius heros:  
 i nunc et dubita ferre, quod ille tulit."

The activity of spinning is itself made to look absurd in such a context. Moreover, in case there should be any doubts about his attitude to dutiful women devoted to domestic arts, Ovid later comments (A.A. 2.685-688) :

"odi quae praebet, quia sit praebere necesse,  
siccaque de lana cogitat ipsa sua.

quae datur officio, non est mihi grata voluptas:  
officium faciat nulla puella mihi."

The housewifely skill of working in wool thus appears as an exasperating and culpable distraction from the far more appealing feminine skill of lovemaking. Once again Ovid deplores the traditional signs of virtue and applauds qualities normally seen as proof of moral decadence.

Ovid is equally disrespectful towards the private moral virtues which the aristocratic code prescribed for men. Many of these are outrageously burlesqued in his shameless parody of the aristocratic funeral "laudatio" in Amores 2.6.<sup>56</sup> The poem is resonant with grief, but its sombre tone only adds to the humour, since the lament is not for a man, but a parrot. However it is a truly remarkable parrot, deserving full funeral honours from the "piae volucres" left behind. Like any noble Roman it was distinguished by the "concordia" and "fides" of its life (Am. 2.6.13-14) :

"plena fuit vobis omni concordia vita,  
et stetit ad finem longa tenaxque fides."

and could fittingly be called "avium gloria" (Am. 2.6.20).

It was remarkable for its eloquence (24), devotion to peace (26) and simplicity of life style (31-31) :

"nux erat esca tibi, causaeque papavera somni,  
pellebatque sitim simplicis umor aquae."

Ovid intensifies the humour by piling on mock-heroic details. Thus he comments sententiously (Am. 2.6.39) :

"optima prima fere manibus rapiuntur avaris,"

compares the parrot to the Greek heroes Protesilaus and Hector, pictures its death in heightened dramatic terms (45-46) and comforts himself with the thought that the bird's shade will go to "volucrum locus ille piarum" (51), while its mortal remains will receive proper burial and a funerary inscription (59-62).

Ovid has borrowed many of the details of form and content which characterized the solemn funeral procession and "laudatio" of the Roman aristocracy, but he has transferred them to a context where they appear wholly absurd. Thus he considerably adapts the hair-tearing, breast-beating and trumpet-playing of professional Roman "praeficae" and musicians to the capacities of avian mourners (Am. 2.6.3-6) and modifies the parrot's burial mound and inscription to a suitable size (59). However the most obvious travesty of aristocratic customs comes in his "laudatio" of the dead parrot. The funeral "laudatio" was one of the major vehicles for the preservation of the aristocratic moral ideal and Polybius tells us that the recital of the dead man's virtues and achieve-

ments contained in it uplifted the listeners and inspired them to great deeds (Pol. Histories. 6.53). However, far from rousing admiration and emulation, the lofty moral qualities of Corinna's dead parrot can only inspire uproarious laughter. Once again Ovid has used the unexpected and the incongruous for a witty attack on the aristocratic moral ideal.

Ovid's attacks on the aristocratic ideal also take the more active form of directly advising behaviour that runs contrary to the aristocratic moral code. Thus in Amores 1.4 he gives his girl lengthy advice on how to evade her husband's<sup>57</sup> notice while she flirts with the poet. In the course of this Ovid makes fun of the conventional features of a virtuous demeanour by advising her to conceal her flirtation "vultu ... modesto" (Am. 1.4.15). And the flushed cheeks normally associated with maidenly modesty are here linked with memories of "Veneris lascivia nostrae" (Am. 1.4.20-21), while Ovid himself appears as a raffish expert in the art of adultery (Am. 1.4.45-46). The position of the elegy is also significant, since it comes directly after Ovid's encomium of his own merits in Amores 1.3. This is probably a deliberate ploy to show the hollowness of Ovid's claim to virtue. It also underlines the farcical nature of his approach to moral issues.

There is a similarly subversive approach to morality

in Amores 2.2. In this elegy Ovid delivers a lecture to Bagoas, the guard of an attractive girl, advising him to perform his duties with lenience. By skilful distortion and sleight of hand Ovid manages to cloak his outrageous advice in a semblance of pristine moral rectitude. Like some sententious moralist he advises Bagoas on the best way to win honours - by conniving at his mistress's escapades (Am. 2.2.27-28) :

"consciūs adsiduos commissi tollet honores -  
quis minor est autem quam tacuisse labor?"

By co-operating Bagoas will win not only honour, but wealth and liberty as well (Am. 2.2.39-40) :

"sic tibi semper honos, sic alta peculia crescent  
haec fac, in exiguo tempore liber eris."

Moreover Ovid roundly condemns informers as lacking in "fides" and deserving imprisonment (42). After a further series of arguments in favour of adultery, the elegy ends with a plea for help.

The humour in the poem springs entirely from Ovid's use of incongruity. He has taken over many of the virtues, institutions and goals admired by the Roman aristocracy and presented them in an unexpected and humorous context. "Castitas" is dismissed as impossible for attractive women (13-14), while "libertas" appears only in a sordid exchange of assistance between mistress and slave (15), "labor" is something to be avoided (28) and "honos" (39), "peculia" (39) and "fides" (42) are all to

be found in smoothing the path of adultery. In this impudent farce Ovid has tacked the labels of traditional virtues on to actions which would normally be seen as symptoms of gross moral decline.

The subject of the husband who must be outwitted by the poet/lover is one which Ovid exploits more than once for its humorous potential. Two other variations on this theme occur in Amores 2.19 and 3.4. Both poems contain a reversal of traditional moral sentiments. In Amores 2.19 Ovid begs the husband to guard his wife better, so that Ovid will have more fun in tricking him (Am. 2.19.57-60 especially). In Amores 3.4, conversely, the husband is reproached for being excessively zealous in guarding his wife. Traditional moral arguments are ingeniously distorted and reversed to support Ovid's case. He begins very plausibly by pointing out that it is impossible to guard the mind as well as the body and argues that (Am. 3.4.9-10) :

"cui peccare licet, peccat minus; ipsa potestas  
semina nequitiae languidiora facit."

He expands on this theme and then demands contemptuously (Am. 3.4.35-36) :

"scilicet ut possit custos "ego" dicere "feci,"  
in laudem servi casta sit illa tui?"

This is a crafty way of undermining the dignity of the husband and of diverting attention from the real moral issue of his wife's fidelity. Ovid presses home his



advantage by using the implicit threat of ridicule,  
commenting urbanely (Am. 3.4.37-42) :

"rusticus est nimium, quem laedit adultera coniunx,  
et notos mores non satis urbis habet  
in qua Martigenae non sunt sine crimine nati  
Romulus Iliades Iliadesque Remus.  
quo tibi formosam, si non nisi casta placebat?  
non possunt ullis ista coire modis."

He then urges the husband to put aside his "vultus ...  
severos" (43) and "rigidi iura ... viri" (44), promising  
that with very little "labor" (46) he shall have as his  
reward many friends and many gifts.

What began as a detached philosophical homily on  
virtuous women and their proper treatment has turned into  
a wheedling lure to conspire against chastity. Like the  
historians Ovid argues that Rome is a city of easy virtue.  
Unlike them, he takes delight in this fact and in effect  
invites the husband and the reader to share his sophistic-  
ated outlook. Traditional moral sentiments take a heavy  
beating. Chastity is misprized, desire to preserve it is  
ridiculed, "laus" is won only by a slave and severity and  
marital rights are to be shrugged off as foolish.

The advice which Ovid gives to his girl in Amores  
3.14 is equally cynical and equally at variance with  
traditional moral sentiment. He begins by reassuring the  
girl that he is not asking for fidelity, but only for  
discretion (Am. 3.14.1-4) :

"non ego, ne pecces, cum sis formosa, recuso,  
 sed, ne sit misero scire necesse mihi;  
 nec te nostra iubet fieri censura pudicam,  
 sed tamen, ut temptes dissimulare, rogat."

The censorship was the most solemn moral office in the Roman "cursus honorum" but Ovid makes it appear ridiculous by using the phrase "nostra ... censura" in such a context.<sup>58</sup> In the advice which follows he continues his bizarre treatment of conventional moral institutions and attitudes. Thus he argues that (Am. 3.14.5) :

"non peccat, quaecumque potest peccasse negare"  
 and he presents the feminine virtues of "modestia",  
 "pudor" and "probitas" only as suitable masks for a wanton life (Am. 3.14.13-14, 16). The girl is urged to become a quick-change artist, laying aside her "pudor" (18) when she enters the bedroom, but resuming it afterwards as valuable camouflage (Am. 3.14.27-28) :

"indue cum tunicis metuentem crimina voltum,  
 et pudor obscenum diffiteatur opus."

Moreover Ovid assures her that he will be very co-operative in believing her innocence and ends with the encouragement (Am. 3.14.50) :

" etsi non causa, iudice vince tuo!"

which casts him in the role of a corrupt judge.

This poem thus combines mockery of the public career and its associated masculine virtues with mockery of the private virtues prescribed by the aristocratic code for

women. Ovid effects this mockery firstly by offering moral advice which is dramatically contrary to the spirit of the aristocratic code and secondly by investing himself with the trappings of solemn moral office, while simultaneously demonstrating his own moral corruption. The aristocratic ideal is thus subjected to attack from all sides.

Ovid's later work, the Ars amatoria, is a joke on a grand scale, in which almost every line contains a witty attack on traditional moral values. As in the Amores, these attacks often take the form of outrageously cynical advice. It would be impossible to discuss all of Ovid's injunctions to his pupils, but a few examples should suffice to show how he flouts traditional moral standards.

The systematic description of the city of Rome is a standard feature of Augustan literature and is normally associated with a flashback to early times and some effusive praise of ancient customs.<sup>59</sup> However in A.A. 1.67ff. Ovid offers a conducted tour of Rome with a difference. This is no nostalgic stroll intended to evoke memories of Rome's austere early architecture and inhabitants. Instead of a lecture on morality Ovid delivers a lecture on hunting women and notes with approval the refinements of the city in his own day - particularly the opulence of the buildings (70) and the elegance of the quarry he pursues ("cultissima femina," 97). Even when he reaches the inevitable comparison between modern and ancient Rome, Ovid does not dwell wistfully on the chastity of the past,

but insists that modern lust is merely a continuation of a hallowed custom, as evidenced by the rape of the Sabines (A.A. 1.133-134)

"scilicet ex illo sollemnia more theatra  
nunc quoque formosis insidiosa manent."

This scandalous comment lends his advice on picking up women at the theatre a patina of pristine virtue which is wholly incongruous.

This passage is followed by some extensive counsel on exploiting the opportunities for dalliance offered by contemporary Rome. In the course of this Ovid provides a great deal of advice inimical to the aristocratic moral ideal. Thus, instead of denouncing moral corruption, he offers ingenious advice on bringing it about, advising on the handmaid's treatment (A.A. 1.355) :

"hanc tu pollicitis, hanc tu corrumpere rogando."

Most of the behaviour he advises is equally ignoble, including as it does deceit (A.A. 1.645), lavish promises (A.A. 1.443-444), perjury (A.A. 1.633), flattery (A.A. 1.439ff) and the acquisition of the noble arts of rhetoric as useful aids to seduction (A.A. 1.459ff). Moreover the important aristocratic institution of "amicitia", which normally has strong moral overtones, is presented by Ovid as shallow and treacherous. Thus in A.A. 1.719-722 he recommends a pretence of "amicitia" to deceive chaste women!

"nec semper veneris spes est profitenda roganti:  
 intret amicitiae nomine tectus amor.  
 hoc aditu vidi tetricae data verba puellae:  
 qui fuerat cultor, factus amator erat."

And shortly after this he exclaims (A.A. 1.739-740):

"conquerar, an moneam mixtum fas omne nefasque?  
 nomen amicitia est, nomen inane fides."

Ovid's tone of outrage here is doubly humorous in view of the blithe disregard for the claims of honourable behaviour in friendship which he has shown himself a few lines earlier. Nor is it only "amicitia" which he warns against. The aristocratic code also invested the ties of family with strong moral significance, but Ovid advises his pupils not to trust in them, urging instead (A.A. 1.752-754) :

" quos credis fidos, effuge, tutus eris.  
 cognatum fratremque cave carumque sodalem:  
 praebabit veros haec tibi turba metus."

The use of the word "turba" with its connotations of a vulgar, disorderly crowd,<sup>60</sup> makes this statement doubly insulting to the hallowed institutions of friendship and family solidarity.

Along with high regard for the "mos maiorum" and for the ties between family and friends, the aristocratic moral code also prescribed "dignitas", which involved a sense of decorum and propriety of behaviour towards all ranks of people. Ovid shatters this as enthusiastically

as most aristocratic institutions. In A.A. Bk. 2 he advises the lover to undertake a variety of degrading tasks in order to please his mistress. Thus in A.A. 2.215-216 he urges:

"nec tibi turpe puta (quamvis sit turpe, placebit),  
ingenua speculum sustinuisse manu."

and in a grotesque parody of aristocratic social behaviour he advises cultivating the friendship of slaves (A.A. 2.251-254) :

"nec pudor ancillas, ut quaeque erit ordine prima,  
nec tibi sit servos demeruisse pudor.  
nomine quemque suo (nulla est iactura) saluta,  
iunge tuis humiles, ambitiose, manus."

This recalls both the early morning call of the "cliens" to pay his respects to the "patronus"<sup>61</sup> (although the roles are dramatically reversed by Ovid, with the slave in the position of power) and also the hand-shaking and expressions of good-will associated with political canvassing.<sup>62</sup> The vocabulary of the public career with its stress on rank ("ordine prima", 251) and ambition ("ambitiose", 254) has been transferred to the absurd and degrading context of currying favour with slaves in a love affair. In consequence the aristocratic code is made to look foolish by association.

Ovid addressed Book 3 of the Ars amatoria to women and in the course of it he offers them a wealth of advice which is directly contrary to the aristocratic ideal.

Among other things he urges them to indulge in as many love affairs as they wish (A.A. 3.61ff.), to cultivate elegance in dress (169ff.), grooming and make-up (193 ff.), to move gracefully and seductively (298ff.) and to acquire skill in music (315ff.), dancing (349) and gambling (353). These are all activities and skills which traditional moralists abhorred in women. So hostile was traditional Roman thought to the notion of sexual liberty for women that even re-marriage was frowned upon by the strictest Romans, according to Seneca. And comments by Valerius Maximus and Livy show that lack of modesty in dress and excessive "cultus" were equally deplored, while other sources show that singing and dancing were seen as evidence of the grossest moral depravity.<sup>63</sup>

Certainly Ovid adds a cautionary rider to all his revolutionary advice. While outlining techniques for deceiving a jealous husband, he deftly reminds the reader that he is not addressing respectable women (A.A. 3.613-616) :

"nupta virum timeat : rata sit custodia nuptae;  
hoc decet, hoc leges iusque pudorque iubent.  
te quoque servari, modo quam vindicta redemit,  
quis ferat? ut fallas, ad mea sacra veni!"

While it is true that freedwomen were conceded far greater liberties in certain respects than respectable married women,<sup>64</sup> Ovid's systematic teaching of the skills

associated with a love affair must still have offended conventional moral sentiment. Unquestionably much of his advice is deliberately designed to shock his readers.

E. J. Kenney sums up the attitude of most critics to the Ars amatoria when he says : "There can be no doubt of the view which Roman officialdom must have taken of the Ars Amatoria: it was an immoral and subversive work, and not all the specious pleading of the Second Book of the Tristia can disguise that it would tend to foster adultery."<sup>65</sup> Whether or not aristocratic women used (or even needed) Ovid's precepts on adultery, the Ars amatoria remains antagonistic in spirit to the traditional image of feminine virtue. Occasional sops to aristocratic sentiment cannot change that fact.

Apart from misusing traditional moral terminology and delivering subversive lectures on immoral themes, Ovid also challenges the aristocratic moral tradition directly. He does this by the novel means of expressing candid enthusiasm for the customs of his own times. Although there are rare occasions when he laments contemporary wickedness, his attitude to his own vices and those of the age is far more frequently one of complacency and even pride.

Even when Ovid makes a show of disapproving of modern vice, his tone is rarely serious. On the few occasions when it is, his attacks on vice are directed at greed and corruption in both the private and the public



sphere. Thus in Amores 1.10 he delivers a cutting reproof to a girl because of her insatiable demands for "munera" (Am. 1.10.11). For once Ovid seems to sympathize with traditional moral standards, for he compares the girl's dishonourable behaviour to corruption in the public career and deplores both (Am. 1.10.37ff.). Similarly in Amores 3.8 his attacks on feminine greed in a love affair are linked to a ringing denunciation of corruption in public life.<sup>66</sup>

However there is a lighter side to Ovid's treatment of feminine wickedness. In Amores 3.11 he expands Catullus's pithy "odi et amo"<sup>67</sup> theme to a full-length elegy in two parts, in which he attacks several feminine vices. In the first half he fulminates against the "vitia" (Am. 3.11.1) of his mistress, complaining about her infidelity (11ff.) and perjury (21-22) and announcing that the affair is over, while in the second half his desire to escape from her "nequitia" (37), "morum crimina" (38), "mores ... malos" (42) and "vitia" (44) is gradually overcome by her beauty. The denunciation of the girl's wickedness in this poem is entirely farcical and cannot be taken as a sign of genuine moral outrage. Although it bears a distant resemblance to traditional diatribes against feminine wickedness, it differs from them in having no didactic intention. Its sole purpose is to make the lover look foolish and helpless, thus adding to the humour of the poem.

Humour is also the primary aim in some other passages where Ovid uses morally loaded terminology to bewail the wickedness of women. Thus in A.A. 1.435-436 he complains :

"non mihi sacrilegas meretricum ut persequar artes,  
cum totidem linguis sint satis ora decem."

A. S. Hollis points out that this expression about ten tongues and ten mouths had a long history in serious poetry and adds that :

"of course its employment for the present context produces intentional bathos."<sup>68</sup>

A similar phrase is used seriously by Vergil in Georgics II. 42-4 and its echo in the undignified context of a catalogue of harlots' tricks renders the passage doubly absurd. In any case, Ovid's moral indignation over the "sacrilegas meretricum ... artes" is clearly insincere, since he himself is engaged in teaching just such skills in the Ars amatoria.

Parody and literary allusion also play an important part in two other passages where Ovid makes a show of moral outrage over women's greed. In A.A. 2.275-278 he makes fun of nostalgia for the past and the poetic motif of the Golden Age by commenting wittily :

"carmina laudantur, sed munera magna petuntur:  
dummodo sit dives, barbarus ipse placet.  
aurea sunt vere nunc saecula : plurimus auro  
venit honos : auro conciliatur amor."

There are a great many allusions packed into these four

suggestive lines. The rapacity and indelicacy of contemporary society are skilfully evoked by Ovid's implication that women are up for sale to the highest bidder, which recalls the traditional notion of feminine greed and promiscuity as signs of moral decline.<sup>69</sup> There are further echoes of tradition in the brief allusion in 1.276 to the rich barbarian. This figure not only recalls the "dives amator" of comedy,<sup>70</sup> but also reminds us of the political outsiders who bought their way to power and office in the face of strong hostility from the aristocracy<sup>71</sup> (an allusion which seems to be picked up in 1.277-278 in Ovid's reference to the purchase of "honos"). However the most surprising echo of traditional treatment of moral themes comes in 1.277 in Ovid's reference to the "aurea ... saecula". The Golden Age was conventionally depicted as characterized by sterling virtue and the absence of wealth and was set in the remote past. But Ovid wittily reverses all this and applies the term to his own sordid, money-grubbing age. His evident amusement at the foibles of his own society makes it impossible to take seriously his laments over the sale of "honos" and "amor". This is obviously no genuine moral diatribe, but a clever literary game.

Similarly, in an obviously deliberate echo of Tibullus 2.4.53-54, Ovid complains bitterly about the avarice of a girl who (R.A. 302) :

" sub titulum nostros misit avara lares."

However a glance at the context reveals that this is no

sincere moral outcry. Ovid has taken the joke of the greedy girl a stage further than his predecessor and is offering the distraught lover advice on how to whip up enough resentment to end his wretched love affair. The sale of the family gods by the girl thus appears not as a genuine moral outrage, but merely as a convenient spur to getting rid of her. Far from demonstrating any respect towards traditional religious observance, Ovid is displaying gross irreverence.

Usually Ovid makes no attempt to conceal his enthusiasm for moral decadence. Indeed he opens Book 2 of the Amores with a gleeful declaration of his allegiance to "nequitia" (Am. 2.2.1) and shortly afterwards presents an entire elegy on this theme, Amores 2.4. This opens with a theatrical confession of his weakness and a fine display of remorse, which (to Ovid's great regret) is wholly ineffectual (Am. 2.4.1-6) :

"non ego mendosos ausim defendere mores  
 falsaque pro vitiis arma movere meis.  
 confiteor - siquid prodest delicta fateri;  
 in mea nunc demens crimina fassus eo.  
 odi, nec possum, cupiens, non esse quod odi;  
 heu, quam quae studeas ponere ferre grave est!"

The humour of this is intensified when we learn the nature of Ovid's moral affliction (to be constantly in love) and the causes of it (virtually every known feminine attribute). Among these causes are many of the classic attributes of feminine virtue, such as "oculos ...

modestos" (11), "pudor" (12) and "simplicitas" (18), which Ovid, in his moral abandonment, finds enticing rather than uplifting. Even when confronted with a show of pristine virtue, he is convinced that it promises wanton delights. (Am. 2.4.15-16) :

"aspera si visa est rigidasque imitata Sabinas,  
velle, sed ex alto dissimulare puto."

Moreover his ardour is so great that he is able to end his catalogue of feminine attractions with the exclamation (Am. 2.4.47-48) :

"denique quas tota quisquam probet urbe puellas,  
noster in has omnis ambitiosus amor."

There is a great deal of provocative humour directed at the aristocratic ideal in this poem. Firstly there is the question of Ovid's pose of remorse for his moral shortcomings. This is patently insincere, since he clearly glories in his own depravity. One might ask then why he bothers to adopt it at all. The answer is surely to score off traditional moralists. Such people would have said that a young man who spent his life in dissipation ought to be thoroughly ashamed of himself, so Ovid obligingly adopts a pose of shame. He then continues the assault on aristocratic moral values by presenting all the traditional signs of feminine virtue as lures to vice and concludes the poem with a gibe at the public career. Ovid's "ambitio" will be directed not to conquests in war, as the aristocratic ideal demanded, but only to conquests in love.

There is an even more defiant show of derision towards the aristocratic ideal in Amores 2.10. In this poem Ovid wishes the austere life on his enemies (Am. 2.10.16) :

" hostibus eveniat vita severa meis."

and prays that he himself may die in the act of love (35). This same hostility towards austerity and chastity is repeated in the Medicamina Faciei when he commends the women of his own day for cultivating elegance in order to attract men (ME. 23-24):

"nec tamen indignum, si vobis cura placendi,  
cum comptos habeant saecula nostra viros."

Moreover his stated preference for the customs of his own age in A.A. 3.121ff. rests on precisely the same rejection of the austerity enshrined in aristocratic moral tradition. Ovid declares emphatically (A.A. 3.121-122) :

"prisca iuvent alios : ego me nunc denique natum  
gratulor : haec aetas moribus apta meis."

and goes on to explain that his preference is due to enthusiasm for the development of "cultus" in contemporary times and the disappearance of (A.A. 3.128) :

"rusticitas, priscis illa superstes avis."

This is a dramatic and evidently sincere rejection of one of the most cherished notions of the aristocratic moral ideal.

While Tibullus and Propertius stage a minor revolt

against the aristocratic moral ideal and the traditional notion of moral decline, Ovid conducts a full-scale rebellion. Unlike the other love elegists, who retain sympathy for some aspects of the aristocratic ideal, Ovid gives no quarter. He sets out to make the aristocratic code of private morality appear wholly absurd by distorting and mis-using its moral terminology for humorous effect, by undermining and parodying its most cherished institutions and values and by taking gleeful delight in his own wickedness and that of his age. He rarely delivers any diatribes against contemporary moral decline for the very good reason that he is one of its most enthusiastic proponents and supporters.

## CHAPTER FIVE : The public career.

The heart of the aristocratic ideal was the concept of service to the state. Success in the public career was traditionally presented as the pinnacle of moral excellence, while failure to become involved in it was seen as reprehensible and even decadent. The love elegists reacted to this traditional view with a mixture of antagonism, humour and respect. Consequently their treatment of the public career is very complex and often displays varying levels of intent and even outright inconsistency. Nevertheless it is important to ponder their handling of the subject, since it is in this field that they make their most significant transformation of the aristocratic ideal and the traditional view of moral decline.

In most of the poems in which Tibullus mentions the public career one of the three attitudes of respect, antagonism or humour is dominant, with either or both of the others running through the poem as a counterpoint. This conflict of attitudes is apparent even in his first elegy. The poem is a pastiche of pastoral, comic, dedicatory and realistic elements and its treatment of the public career involves some odd shifts in approach and emphasis. Its complexity is increased even further by Tibullus's subtle re-shaping of some traditional moral stereotypes. The aristocratic moral ideal had typically presented the thirst for personal glory and the glory of



the Roman state as the primary motives for going to war, but Tibullus implicitly challenges the sincerity of this ideal in his opening words. He begins the poem with an emphatic rejection of the most hallowed pursuit of the Roman aristocracy, the military career, contemptuously resigning it to men who are obsessed by greed (1.1.1-4):

"divitias alius fulvo sibi congerat auro  
et teneat culti iugera multa soli,  
quem labor adsiduus vicino terreat hoste,  
Martia cui somnos classica pulsa fugent."

The traditional aristocratic image of the soldier as a glorious champion of the state is severely tarnished by this ploy.

Nor does Tibullus limit himself to challenging a single stereotype. An equally familiar paragon in the shrine of aristocratic thought is the hard-working farmer who tends his crops and his animals, but is always ready to be called away in the service of the state.<sup>1</sup> Tibullus has undermined the dignity of the soldier by emphasizing his greed and he now proceeds to make the farmer suspect as well. He does this by the very simple expedient of casting himself in this role. In loving detail he pictures the tasks of husbandry and worship which he will perform (7-36) and vigorously identifies himself with the countrymen of ancient times who performed the same religious rites (37-40). In this way he arrogates to himself the halo of virtue traditionally associated with

the rustic way of life. The implications of this are disturbing. Tibullus has upset the aristocratic stereotypes of the soldier as austere, praiseworthy and loyal to the "mos maiorum" and the lover as decadent, worthless and a disgrace to the "mos maiorum". Instead he shows the soldier as greedy and contemptible and the lover as austere and pious towards the gods, thus suggesting that the lover and not the soldier is the true inheritor of ancestral customs. Moreover Tibullus strongly suggests that the lover is saner and more humane than the grasping soldier (49-52) :

" ... sit dives iure, furorem  
 qui maris et tristes ferre potest pluvias.  
 o quantum est auri pereat potiusque smaragdi,  
 quam fleat ob nostras ulla puella vias."

The bulk of the poem is thus taken up by some provocative challenges to aristocratic moral stereotypes in which an element of disapproval of the public career is clearly evident.

However the labyrinthine structure of Tibullus's poetry often conceals some unexpected turnings. After rejecting a military career and condemning greed for plunder, he now proceeds to exempt Messalla from his criticism of soldiers with the statement (53-54) :

"te bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique,  
 ut domus hostiles praeferat exuvias."

and contrasts this with his own decadent and delicious

life style as a captive of love. Then, after a maudlin vision of his own funeral, he returns to his original theme of rejection of war and closes the poem with an exuberant manifesto (75-78) :

"hic ego dux milesque bonus : vos, signa tubaeque,  
 ite procul, cupidis vulnera ferte viris,  
 ferte et opes : ego composito securus acervo  
 dites despiciam despiciamque famem."

Because of its position as the opening elegy this poem has particular importance as a "programme piece" for the rest of the work. Although Tibullus makes no explicit statements about moral decline in it he introduces many of the elements which will be included in the motif in his later poems - the choice of a simple rustic existence, the rejection of the public career and the conviction that war is a horrifying consequence of lust for wealth. The variations of tone and attitude in his handling of the public career in this poem are also typical of his work as a whole. There is obvious conflict between Tibullus's disapproval of war and his regard for Messalla's military feats. Undoubtedly the inner tension which results from this can be attributed in part to the different levels of intent in the poem. In the brief passage from 1.41-58 Tibullus forces into uneasy synthesis the disparate literary motifs of contentment with one's lot, praise of a patron and the elegiac lover's obligatory performance of "nequitia". Inevitably some inconsistency results. However it seems likely that

this inconsistency is also a product of Tibullus's genuine ambivalence towards the public career. There is nothing to suggest that his admiration of Messalla's military feats is insincere, but he firmly refuses a military career for himself, choosing instead to devote his life to love as either a captive (55) or soldier (75) in the service of his mistress. To a great extent this stance is pure buffoonery, intended as an impudent shaft against conventional aristocratic values. Nevertheless, along with the humour, Tibullus also shows in this elegy a glimpse of the profound horror of war which plays such an important part in his treatment of moral decline in the later poems.

However this sensitivity to the horrors of war does not preclude a strong sympathy for some aspects of the aristocratic moral code. In the remaining Messalla poems Tibullus gives high praise to great deeds performed in the service of the state and to the traditional rustic virtues of industry and austerity. The highest possible reward for service to the state was, of course, the triumph.<sup>2</sup> Tibullus treats this subject seriously and in poem 1.7, which was written to celebrate Messalla's triumph over the Aquitanians in 27 B.C., he shows unambiguous pride in the achievements of his patron and in his own role in the campaign. The typical aristocratic concern for the honour of the family is also given vivid expression in his prayer for Messalla's offspring (55-56):

"at tibi succrescat proles quae facta parentis  
 augeat et circa stat veneranda senem."

Similarly in poem 2.1, which describes the celebration of a regular feast day in the country, Tibullus's praise of Messalla is firmly set in a framework of reverence for tradition. The festival is conducted (2.1.2) :

"ritus ut a prisco traditus extat avo"

and the poem has all the trappings of ancestral ritual, work in the fields and labour at the loom. It is the traditional Roman vision of the ideal society brought to life and the triumphant Messalla is honoured as a representative of that tradition. Tibullus salutes him as (2.1.33-34) :

"gentis Aquitanae celebrer Messalla triumphis  
 et magna intonsis gloria victor avis."

and this tone of respect and admiration is sustained throughout the poem. No discordant undertones of mockery or anger occur and the love motifs in the poem are firmly subordinated to the themes of worship and celebration.

The poem in which Tibullus shows the most profound respect for the aristocratic tradition of service to the state is 2.5, written in honour of Messalla's son Messalinus on the occasion of his installation as one of the "quindecimviri sacris faciundis". The poem has been largely neglected by critics until the last two decades and those who have discussed it have concentrated chiefly

on its relationship to Augustanism and its handling of the Aeneas motif.<sup>3</sup> However it is also interesting for its treatment of the public career, which shows none of the ambivalence or hostility apparent in some of Tibullus's elegies.

After the opening invocation to Apollo Tibullus launches into a description of early Rome which is fundamentally in sympathy with aristocratic tradition. The city is shown in its early days as a rustic society with a profound respect for the gods and an inescapable destiny to rule the world. The praise of Messalinus which rounds off the poem shows him as a heroic figure following in this tradition. The likeness to ancient heroes is emphasized by some subtle verbal parallels between the Sibyl's prophecy of glory for Aeneas (39-64) and Tibullus's own prophecy of glory for Messalinus (113-122). He styles himself as "vates" (114) like the Sibyl (65) and his closing invocation to Apollo (121-122) contains an echo of her prayer for perpetual virginity (64). Although the poem contains a disapproving reference to the civil war (71ff.) and a characteristic passage in praise of peace (79ff.), Tibullus shows no antagonism to the public career as such. When he finally returns to the original subject of Messalinus, his eager vision of celebrating the young man's triumph shows intense enthusiasm for this climactic event of the public career (115ff.). Thus the elegy ends with a fervent display of respect for the crowning honour of the aristocratic ideal.

A startling contrast to this is provided by poems 2.6, 1.2 and 2.3 in which Tibullus approaches the public career in a spirit of farce. Military imagery dominates the opening lines of poem 2.6. Tibullus begins with an announcement and a question (2.6.1) :

"castra Macer sequitur : tenero quid fiet Amori?"

and begs Cupid to call the rebel back to his own "otia" and "signa". Tibullus then switches to a very different attitude and exclaims (7-10) :

"quod si militibus parces, erit hic quoque miles,  
 ipse levem galea qui sibi portet aquam.  
 castra peto, valeatque Venus valeantque puellae;  
 et mihi sunt vires et mihi laeta tuba est."

After this he slumps back to reality with the rueful admission (11-12) :

"magna loquor, sed magnifice mihi magna locuto  
 excutiunt clausae fortia verba fores."

The use of military imagery here is skilful and amusing. Tibullus pictures Macer changing sides from love to war and makes a show of protest.<sup>4</sup> Then abruptly he switches from disapproval to approval and decides to change sides himself. And then he changes back. There is a dazzling series of contrasts - love, war, love, war, love. Tibullus leaps from one to the other like a jack in the box and finally subsides on love. This rapid and repeated switching of loyalties serves to show the excitable, changeable nature of the lover and the whirl-  
 ing confusion of his state of mind and it acts as an

introduction to his pleading speech to Nemesis. It is Tibullus rather than the army that is made to look absurd in this passage. He uses military terminology to highlight the gap between his grandiose intentions and his cowardly actions. He is so ineffectual a soldier that the slamming of a door strikes him speechless. Traditional moral and military terminology has been transferred from the sphere of the public career to the private world of love and cleverly used for humorous effect.

Humour also dominates in poem 1.2, where Tibullus explores the classic elegiac theme of "all for love, or the world well lost." He polarizes the choices available to a young man by drawing a vivid antithesis between the life of a greedy adventurer who chooses war and plunder and his own simple, blissful country life with Delia (65-76). The potential lover who opts for a military career is stigmatized by Tibullus as unfeeling, stupid, avaricious and vain - in fact a wholly contemptible figure, embodying at least one of the classic symptoms of moral decline in his greed for gain (65-70) :

"ferreus ille fuit qui, te cum posset habere,  
 maluerit praedas stultus et arma sequi.  
 ille licet Cilicum victas agat ante catervas,  
 ponat et in capto Martia castra solo,  
 totus et argento contextus, totus et auro,  
 insideat celeri conspiciendus equo."

This unflattering portrait obviously owes a good deal to



the conventions of comedy<sup>5</sup> and it cannot be taken as Tibullus's serious estimate of Roman soldiery.

The element of surprise also plays an important part in poem 2.3, which is a light-hearted lament prompted by Nemesis's withdrawal to the country.<sup>6</sup> In the course of this Tibullus breaks into an apparently serious attack on the wickedness of his own age (1.35ff.). The initial targets of his criticism are greed for plunder and the carnage of war (35-38) :

"ferrea non venerem sed praedam saecula laudant:

praeda tamen multis est operata malis.

praeda feras acies cinxit discordibus armis;

hinc cruor, hinc caedes mors proplorque venit."

but he is soon swept into a full-scale Sallustian diatribe against seafaring, greed for land and foreign marbles, lavish building and fishponds (39-46). Tibullus castigates soldiers as a pack of greedy ruffians intent on gain and equates them with the archetypal villains in traditional accounts of moral decline - the rapacious and arrogant men who seized property and exotic works of art and devoted themselves to luxury. It would be tempting to take this outburst seriously if it were not followed by an outrageous volte-face in which Tibullus throws in his own lot with the "praedatores" (49-50) :

"heu heu divitibus video gaudere puellas:

iam veniant praedae, si Venus optat opes."

Obviously he has adopted the stance of a moral crusader

only in order to make his own display of "nequitia" a few lines later as spectacular as possible. His attack on the military career is merely the beginning of an amusing skit on the traditional version of moral decline.

The most dramatic example of Tibullus's ambivalence towards the public career and the complexity of its treatment in his work is provided by poem 1.3. Tibullus has fallen ill in Corcyra while on campaign and from his sick-bed he addresses Messalla, Delia and the gods. For once his typically haphazard wandering through a maze of themes is highly effective, evoking vividly the random, feverish thoughts of a sick man. Antagonism, respect and humour all surface in Tibullus's handling of the public career in this poem. After describing his departure from home and uttering the pious prayer that he may yet live to worship his family "Penates" and ancient "Lar" (33-34), Tibullus launches into a nostalgic description of the Golden Age. The passage builds up to a thunderous climax in which he contrasts the peace of ancient times with the horrifying wars and carnage of his own day (47-50). The atrocities of war are thus presented as the major symptom of man's decline. Tibullus even hints that they are a punishment sent by the gods for man's impiety, for he begs to be spared on the grounds that he is innocent (51-52) :

"parce, pater. timidum non me periuria terrent,  
non dicta in sanctos impia verba deos."

However there is a surprising transition in tone from the

horror and disapproval of war in this passage to the pride in his own military achievements which is evident in Tibullus's choice of a military epitaph. Luxuriating in visions of their own deaths and the misery they will cause is a favourite pastime of the love poets, but usually their epitaphs are chosen to highlight the sufferings they have endured in love.<sup>7</sup> Tibullus's desire to be remembered as a man who died on campaign is remarkable in the context of love elegy and suggests considerable respect for the aristocratic tradition.

Nevertheless he soon moves away from this serious treatment of the army to a whimsical picture of an after-life dedicated to a very different form of warfare (63-64) :

"ac iuvenum series teneris immixta puellis  
ludit, et adsidue proelia miscet amor."

The motif of the "lover as a soldier" is a staple device for humour in Latin love elegy,<sup>8</sup> but this ethereal variation on it has an extra dimension of absurdity. There is humour also in the devout malice of Tibullus's prayer for his rivals, which follows his description of the "scelerata ... sedes" of the underworld (81-82) :

"illic sit quicumque meos violavit amores,  
optavit lentas et mihi militias."

Here again military campaigns are presented amusingly as no more than tedious obstructions to a love affair. Yet although there are undertones of respect and humour in

this poem, a brooding horror of war is dominant. Images of sickness, torture and death pervade the poem and serve to hammer home Tibullus's message that war is an impious departure from man's original lifestyle of peace and simplicity.

An even more serious diatribe against military life is the impassioned anti-war poem 1.10.<sup>9</sup> This is the final poem of Book I and it draws together some of the most important themes of the book, including praise of the simple, rural life and rejection of the military career. Tibullus's hatred of war provides a unifying thread in the elegy which begins with an outcry against the inventor of the sword and ends with an invocation to peace. He uses heavily weighted moral terms for his condemnation of war, stating explicitly that it is a product of greed, which did not exist in an earlier, simpler age (7-8) :

"divitis hoc vitium est auri, nec bella fuerunt,  
faginus astabat cum scyphus ante dapes."

He goes on to utter a fervent wish that he had lived then instead of amid the war-mongering madness of his own day (11-14). After refusing a military career for himself (29-32) and denouncing war as madness ("furor" 33), he presents a portrait of the truly praiseworthy man and his simple country existence (39-40) :

"quin potius laudandus hic est quem prole parata  
occupat in parva pigra senecta casa!"

The choice of words here is highly significant. The aristocratic moral tradition always had an overwhelming preoccupation with the winning of praise through a public career, but Tibullus implicitly denies the value of this ideal by his assertion that the old peasant farmer is more admirable than the soldier. Nor can the rejection of war in this poem be seen as a mere pose of the elegiac lover, for the life Tibullus exalts as greater than a military career is not one of idle love affairs, but rather a frugal, hard-working family life in the country. In Tibullus's poetry the trappings of country life - crops, animals, ploughs and festivals - are both the products of peace and the symbols of it. They are also symbols of the ideal society of early times. Thus his choice of a rustic existence (43) not only shows devotion to the cause of peace, but also demonstrates his solidarity with the moral values of early times, as he interprets them. He cherishes the traditional aristocratic values of austerity and industry, but rejects the aristocratic dedication to war. The only battles which are admissible are the skirmishes of love (51-64) and even here cruelty is condemned (65-66).

Tibullus lends urgency to his condemnation of war by giving it an intensely personal expression. Instead of registering an abstract protest against war, he describes his own adrenalin response to it (1.10.11-14) :

"tunc mihi vita foret vulgi nec tristia nossem  
 arma nec audissem corde micante tubam.  
 nunc ad bella trahor, et iam quis forsitan hostis  
 haesura in nostro tela gerit latere."

Tibullus's thudding heart, his unwillingness to fight ("ad bella trahor") and the terrifyingly vivid image of the death weapons already being carried lend this protest considerable immediacy and conviction. This is juxtaposed with an equally vivid and detailed picture of the rustic life of peace which he wants to enjoy. It is significant that Tibullus repeats the themes of poem 1.1, presenting rustic worship and labour as activities in harmony with the "mos maiorum" (19ff.), while warfare is described in morally disapproving terms ("mala", 5; "vitium", 7). Within the context of this poem Tibullus thus emerges unambiguously as a champion of peace and a critic of the aristocratic ideal of military service.

Tibullus's work provides dramatic illustration of the complexity of the treatment of the public career in Latin love elegy. At one level he finds in it a wealth of material for humour and he transposes the characteristic terminology of the public career to the private sphere of love with amusing effect. On another level he is respectful towards the public career and honours its institutions in poems celebrating Messalla. On yet another level he approaches it in a spirit of antagonism and enquiry, rejecting its invitations to wealth and settling up in opposition to its ideal of fame and prowess in war the ideal of peace and obscurity.

Like Tibullus, Propertius shows a variety of attitudes towards the public career. In a handful of poems he accords it grudging respect, but more frequently he uses it as a subject for humour or treats it with open antagonism. Even where his attitude to the public career seems respectful, this respect is generally linked to a personal refusal to take part in it.

In the first few poems of Book I Propertius takes great pains to create the atmosphere in which the drama of his love affair with Cynthia is enacted. From the beginning he emphasizes the schism of the lover from the real world. Love is shown as a disease (1.1.26) and a madness (1.1.7, 1.4.11, 1.5.3), in whose realm the values of the normal world no longer apply (1.5). When the subject of the public career first enters Propertius's poetry in the form of an elegy addressed to his friend Tullus (1.6), a hostile and unwelcoming reception has already been prepared for it. In the first five poems of Book I Propertius has shown himself as a man possessed by frenzy, viewing the world through the astigmatic gaze of the lover. In poem 1.5 he follows a sketch of his own distraught condition with an emphatic statement that the usual aristocratic passports to success are entirely useless in the world of love (1.5.21-24) :

"nec iam pallorem totiens mirabere nostrum,  
aut cur sim toto corpore nullus ego.  
nec tibi nobilitas poterit succurrere amanti:  
nescit Amor priscis cedere imaginibus."

This rejection of the values cherished by the aristocracy prepares the way for Propertius's refusal in poem 1.6 to join his friend Tullus on a posting abroad. His refusal to take part in this ascent up the rungs of the public career is extremely revealing. After describing Cynthia's tears and emotional scenes, which prevent him from leaving Italy, Propertius urges Tullus to pursue further honours (1.6.19-36) :

"tu patrum meritis conare anteire secures,  
et vetera oblitis iura refer sociis. 20  
nam tua non aetas umquam cessavit amori,  
semper et armatae cura fuit patriae;  
et tibi non umquam nostros puer iste labores  
afferat et lacrimis omnia nota meis!  
me sine, quem semper voluit fortuna iacere, 25  
hanc animam extremae reddere nequitiae.  
multi longinquo periere in amore libenter,  
in quorum numero me quoque terra tegat.  
non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis:  
hanc me militiam fata subire volunt. 30  
at tu seu mollis qua tendit Ionia, seu qua  
Lydia Pactoli tingit arata liquor;  
seu pedibus terras seu pontum carpere remis  
ibis, et accepti pars eris imperii:  
tum tibi si qua mei veniet non immemor hora, 35  
vivere me duro sidere certus eris."

The passage begins as an apparently conventional piece of encouragement and praise with a thoroughly traditional



exhortation to Tullus to try and outstrip his uncle's honours and later some implicit praise of Rome's achievement in the provinces in the reference to "accepti ... imperii" (34). However, in the series of contrasts between Propertius and Tullus which follows his initial exhortation, Propertius gradually begins to undermine the importance of the public career. He ascribes to himself many of the qualities of endurance traditionally associated with the public career (talking of his "labores" (23), "militiam" (30), "duro sidere" (36) ), while subtly associating Tullus with softness by picturing him in "mollis Ionia" (31) and Lydia, places traditionally associated with luxury and decadence.<sup>10</sup> The implication is that the lover is tougher and has more to endure than the man on service overseas. The effect of this is to show the complete distortion of the lover's values and his overwhelming self absorption. There is also a humorous gibe at aristocratic values in Propertius's plea for leave to dedicate himself to "extremae ... nequitiae" (26), traditionally a symptom of moral decline. He uses this plea to present himself as a delinquent, embracing his own moral ruin. This rejection of traditional aristocratic values is caught up again in the poem which follows it, 1.7. In this elegy Propertius asserts that he will seek a glorious reputation (the traditional aim of the public career) only in love and poetry (1.7.9-10) :

"hic mihi conteritur vitae modus, haec mea fama est,  
hinc cupio nomen carminis ire mei."

The elegy to Tullus with its apparent respect for aristocratic values is thus framed by two poems which reject those values. Although Tullus himself still emerges as an admirable practitioner of the aristocratic virtues, Propertius makes his own personal indifference to those virtues uncompromisingly clear.

However Propertius's personal indifference to the public career is not allowed to intrude on poem 3.22, which is also addressed to Tullus. In this elegy Propertius presents his friend with a catalogue of reasons why he should quit the foreign parts where he has been lingering and return to Italy. It is a very patriotic poem, obviously modelled on Vergil's praise of Italy in Georg. 2.136-176 and it gives a comprehensive list of Italy's attractions. First among these are its moral prowess and its strength in war. Propertius proclaims proudly (3.22.17-22) :

"omnia Romanae cedent miracula terrae;

natura hic posuit quidquid ubique fuit.

armis apta magis tellus quam commoda noxae.

Famam, Roma, tuae non pudet historiae.

20

nam quantum ferro tantum pietate potentes

status : victrices temperat ira manus."

This statement reflects considerable pride in Rome's military achievements and cherished moral values. The ending of the poem is also extremely revealing, since Propertius makes a final attempt to persuade Tullus to return by

pointing out that Italy gives the greatest scope for the winning of that honour which his high birth demands (3.22.39-42) :

"haec tibi, Tulla, parens, haec est pulcherrima coles,  
 hic tibi pro digna gente petendus honos,  
 hic tibi ad eloquium cives, hic ampla nepotum  
 spes et venturae coniugis aptus amor."

These lines may have been written primarily as the plea most calculated to persuade Tullus, but they also seem to show approval of the traditional aims and activities of the aristocratic public career - "honos", "eloquium" and "spes nepotum". When writing in honour of a friend Propertius, like Tibullus, can be generous in his praise and encouragement of service to the state. For once humour and hostility are put aside and the aristocratic ideal is treated with genuine respect.

The other main area in which Propertius shows respect for service to the state is in his poems in praise of Augustus,<sup>11</sup> but even in these there is some ambiguity. This is particularly evident in poem 3.4, where Propertius appears to lavish praise and encouragement on Augustus for the Eastern expedition which he was popularly supposed to be contemplating.<sup>12</sup> The poem is interesting and short enough to be quoted in full :

"Arma deus Caesar dices meditatur ad Indos,  
 et freta gemmiferi findere classe maris.  
 magna, viri, merces: parat ultima terra triumphos;  
 Tigris et Euphrates sub tua iura fluent;

sera, sed Ausoniis veniet provincia virgis;  
assuescent Latio Partha tropaea Iovi.  
ite agite, expertae bello date lintea prorae,  
et solitum armigeri ducite munus equi!  
omina fausta cano. Crassos clademque plate!  
ite et Romanae consulite historiae.  
Mars pater et sacrae fatalia lumina Vestae,  
ante meos obitus sit precor illa dies,  
qua videam spoliis oneratos Caesaris axes,  
ad vulgi plausus saepe resistere equos  
inque sinu carae nixus spectare puellae  
incipiam et titulis oppida capta legam,  
tela fugacis equi et bracati militi arcus,  
et subter captos arma sedere duces!  
ipsa tuam serva prolem, Venus : hoc sit in aevum,  
cernis ab Aenea quod superesse caput.  
praeda sit haec illis, quorum meruere labores:  
me sat erit Sacra plaudere posse Via."

This poem is apparently brimming with patriotic fervour. Nevertheless there are a few discordant notes in it. One of Propertius's major themes in Book 3 is the wickedness of greed (this appears in poems 3.5, 3.7, 3.12 and 3.13) and the importance of being satisfied with a simple life on one's native soil. But in this poem (3.4) he lays great stress on the attractions of booty as a reason for going to war. He implies that Augustus is intent on plunder. India is "~~cities~~", (1), the sea is "gemmiferi" (2), the result of the expedition will be "magna ... merces" (3), Propertius

prays that he may see "spoliis oneratos Caesaris axes"

(13). Any solemnity which might have attached to this prayer is still further reduced by the image which follows it. Propertius pictures himself languishing in his mistress's bosom and just barely able to raise his eyes enough to glance at the triumphal procession. The triumph is thus insultingly reduced to the status of a minor distraction from the pleasures of love. Some critics have taken the poem at its face value as an expression of genuine admiration and respect for the military career of Augustus.<sup>13</sup> However it seems far more likely that it contains an ironical undertone. This view is strengthened by Propertius's own refusal in the last two lines of the poem to be associated with the expedition. Moreover the position of the poem is highly significant since it is sandwiched between poem 3.3, which contains a vivid expression of Propertius's indifference to the public career (3.3.39ff.), and poem 3.5, his rejection of warfare and his repudiation of this same campaign to avenge Crassus. What appears to be a simple poem in praise of Rome's military power can thus be interpreted as a subtly presented rejection of the public career.

The thin veneer of respect for the public career which appears in these few poems is almost entirely absent in the rest of Propertius's poetry. Elsewhere he frequently uses it as a subject for humour or as a platform for serious social and literary statements. He often strives after humorous effect by transposing the vocabulary

of the public career to the undignified and incongruous arena of the bedroom. Unlike Ovid, who draws heavily on the terminology of law, Propertius concentrates almost exclusively on the army for this vocabulary. He makes extensive use of the motif of the lover as a soldier of Venus, which Baker points out "was already a commonplace figure of Roman love elegy."<sup>14</sup> Propertius frequently presents himself as the soldier in the service of Love (1.6.30, 2.1.45, 3.8.32ff., 4.1.137-138) and he describes Love itself in military terms (1.9.28, 2.2.2, 2.12.16, 2.13.1-2). Although this lavish use of military terminology seems to be humorously intended, it quickly becomes tedious and repetitious.

However there are a few occasions when Propertius succeeds in injecting a contagious gaiety into his treatment of the hackneyed military motif and these may repay examination. There is an amusing burlesque of the Roman triumph in poem 2.14, where Propertius gleefully recalls the night he has just spent with Cynthia (2.14.23-28) :

"haec mihi devictis potior victoria Parthis,  
 haec spolia, haec reges, haec mihi currus erunt.  
 magna ego dona tua figam, Cytherea, columna,  
 taleque sub nostro nomine carmen erit:  
 HAS PONO ANTE EVAS TIBI, DEVA, PROPERTIUS AEDIS  
 INVIVAS, TOTA NOCTE RECEPTIS AMANS."

There is no thematic connection whatsoever between the rest of the poem and the Parthian campaign. Presumably Propertius introduces the image of the triumph because this represented

the most coveted glory imaginable for a Roman and thus suitably expressed his exultation. However it also provides him with an opportunity to have some fun at the expense of this solemn institution. Propertius's picture of himself as a triumphant general is absurd enough, but the votive inscription which he plans is entirely hilarious. It is surely no accident that "exuvias" has the double meaning of "plunder" and "stripped off clothing". Juxtaposed with the phrase "tota nocte receptus amans" it evokes an absurd image of the generalissimo Propertius gravely removing his clothing at the height of a triumph in order to offer it to the goddess.

Amusing and successful use is also made of military terminology in the spectacle of Cynthia triumphant in poem 4.8. There have already been hints about her dynamic nature in the earlier books (in 1.13.25-26 Propertius admits resignedly :

"omnia consuevi timidus perferre superbae  
iussa neque arguto facta dolore queri." )

and now she appears in a glorious conquering rage. The military motif is carried through most of the poem from Propertius's decision (4.8.27-28) :

"cum fieret nostro totiens iniuria lecto,  
mutato volui castra movere toro"

to Cynthia's furious arrival (4.8.56) :

"spectaculum capta nec minus urbe fuit"

and her assault on the other women and immediate victory (4.8.63-64) :

"Cynthia gaudet in exuviis victricque recurrit  
et mea perversa sauciat ora manu."

There are even a couple of captives from the skirmish. Propertius tells his fellow prisoner Lygdamus (4.8.70) :

" Lygdame, nil potui : tecum ego captus eram."

And Cynthia, like a victorious general, lays down the terms of peace (4.8.81-82) :

"indixit legem : respondi ego "legibus utar,"  
riserat imperio facta superba dato."

The final cementing of the truce is also described in military jargon (4.8.88) :

" ... et toto solvimus arma toro."

The humour in this poem springs from the deliberate incongruity of using high-flown diplomatic and military terminology in such a riotously undignified context. Propertius captures the disreputable vitality of the characters and setting with deft touches - the confusion of the street scene in the opening lines, the gossip in a noisy tavern (19-20), the collared lap-dogs of Cynthia's lover (24), the uproarious drunken party with the clapping dwarf, the girl being pelted with roses (39ff.) and the ominously flickering lamplight (43). All these combine to create a superb setting for Cynthia's spectacular entrance and the rumbustious brawl of the call girls which follows. By reporting this scene of low life and moral decadence in the



lofty terminology of the public career, Propertius plays havoc with the dignity of the aristocratic ideal.

The picture of Cynthia as a triumphant general seems to be a product of sheer exuberance, but there are other poems where Propertius's humour takes on an acid quality. In these cases he often expresses open antagonism towards the ideals of the Roman aristocracy and the institution of the public career. This antagonism is most often found in poems containing references to Augustus. Propertius seems to use the subjects of Augustus's moral legislation and military triumphs as a forum for stating his own attitudes to moral issues and the public career. An example of this is found in poem 2.7, where Propertius in celebrating the repeal of Augustus's marriage laws forcefully rejects traditional aristocratic notions about the family and service to the state.

After rejoicing over the repeal of the law and defying Jupiter himself to part a pair of unwilling lovers, Propertius extends his defiance to Augustus (2.7.5-6) :

"At magnus Caesar." sed magnus Caesar in armis:

devictae gentes nil in amore valent."

This curt dismissal of Augustus's diplomatic and military feats is followed up a few lines later by Propertius's flat refusal to father any children for service in the Roman army (2.7.13-18) :

"unde mihi patriis natos praebere triumphis?

nullus de nostro sanguine miles erit.

quod si vera meae comitarem castra puellae,

non mihi sat magnus Castoris iret equus.

hinc etenim tantum meruit mea gloria nomen,  
gloria ad hibernos lata Borysthenidas."

This is no conventional repetition of the standard comic pose of "nequitia". The topical references to Augustus's military campaigns and moral legislation make this poem a thoughtful and provocative attack on the aristocratic ideal. Augustus was attempting to restore the traditional standards of morality, the "mos maiorum", but Propertius stonewalls him. With sardonic and insolent humour he rejects the real army and offers instead to follow the "castra" of his mistress. Galinsky comments on this use of military terminology : "Ironically but purposely, the elegist transvaluates official values into private ones."<sup>15</sup>

The moral code of the lover is brought into direct collision with the traditional moral code of the aristocracy, which is contemptuously overturned. This hostility towards the aristocratic ideal continues throughout most of Book 2. Certainly in poem 2.10 Propertius does make a gesture of willingness to celebrate Augustus's military exploits, but his offer is ambiguous and quickly withdrawn. And in the remainder of Book 2 his opposition to Rome's warfare abroad is clearly evident.

A particularly severe indictment of the Roman army and Augustus's campaigns is implicit in poem 2.15, where Propertius's opposition to war is founded on humanitarian objections. After reminiscing joyfully about a night spent

in lovemaking, Propertius suggests that if all men dedicated their lives to love there would be no wars (2.15.41-43) :

"qualem si cuncti cuperent decurrere vitam  
 et pressi multo membra iacere mero,  
 non ferrum crudele neque esset bellica navis,  
 nec nostra Actiacum verteret ossa mare,  
 nec totiens propriis circum oppugnata triumphis 45  
 lassa foret crines soluere Roma suos.  
 haec certe merito poterunt laudare minores.  
 laeserunt nullos pocula nostra deos."

The bitterness of this passage comes as a shock after the exuberance which has preceded it. Propertius is merciless in his assault on aristocratic values and completely reverses conventional notions about love, war and moral decline. The drunken lovers appear not as moral delinquents, but as blameless preservers of peace. In contrast jingoistic warriors are roundly condemned. The Battle of Actium is openly criticized for the deaths it caused and the hallowed institution of the triumph appears as a positive enemy to Rome (45-46), not a glorious ritual, but the agent of death and bereavement. Clearly the forthright criticism of the Battle of Actium implies a criticism of the men whose conflicting ambitions were responsible for it (Antony and Augustus), but it also reflects Propertius's wider disapproval of the whole ethos of the public career. The contrast between lover and soldier is a recurrent motif in his poetry and he is using it here to set two codes of

morality in opposition. Significantly the lover's code is triumphantly vindicated. Propertius dramatically transforms the traditional Roman concern about posterity by arguing that lovers who have spent their lives in gay suppers will be praised by future generations as innocent of sacrilege. He strongly suggests that the men who have dedicated their lives to war will not be considered so guiltless. It is a striking reversal of traditional moral concepts.

Similarly in poem 3.5 there is a serious and vividly drawn contrast between the values of lovers and the men who pursue the public career. Once again lovers emerge as a "peace party" and Propertius gives forceful humanitarian reasons for his objections to warfare. He has sufficient imagination and empathy to put himself in the place of the victims of Roman arms and this explains much of his coolness towards the Roman army and warfare in general. He begins by stating his position on love and war with vigour and conviction (3.5.1-12) :

"Pacis Amor deus est, pacem veneramur amantes:

sat mihi cum domina proelia dura mea.

nec tantum invisio pectus mihi carpitur auro,

nec bibit e gemma divite nostra sitis,

nec mihi mille iugis Campania pinguis aratur, 5

nec miser aera paro clade, Corinthe, tua.

o prima infelix fingenti terra Prometheo!

ille parum cauti pectoris egit opus.

corpora disponens mentem non vidit in arte :

recta animi primum debuit esse via.

10

nunc maris in tantum vento iactamur et hostem

quaerimus, atque armis nectimus arma nova."

He then points out the futility of this scramble for power and money, since rank and wealth cannot survive the grave. And he views with satisfaction his own present life dedicated to poetry, love and drinking and makes prudent plans for his retirement, envisaging an old age dedicated to philosophy. He finishes the poem with the parting gibe (3.5.47-48) :

"exitus hic vitae superest mihi : vos, quibus arma  
grata magis, Crassi signa referte domum."

There are a number of interesting points in this poem. In the first place, Propertius makes it clear that he believes that the main reason for going to war is the ignoble motive of greed (3-6). Nor are Roman armies exempt from this criticism. It was a Roman army under the command of Mummius which sacked Corinth in 146 B.C. And by his disclaimer in 3.5.6 :

"nec miser aera paro, clade, Corinthe, tua"

Propertius implies that the men who did do such a thing were "miseri". Thus within the first few lines of the poem he has cleverly suggested that the Roman army is a band of greedy wretches. But there is more to come. With his complaint about Prometheus's negligence (3.5.10) :

" recta animi primum debuit esse via"

he implies that they are spiritually crooked as well. His

decision to dedicate his old age to philosophy is also significant, since philosophy was frowned upon in Rome.<sup>16</sup> Propertius takes the defiant stance of dedicating his youth to activities traditionally considered morally decadent (drinking bouts, love poetry and love itself) and unrepentantly intends to devote his old age to an activity which seemed scarcely less disreputable to the Roman aristocracy. His parting couplet makes quite clear his antagonism towards the activities of a military career. Love and philosophy, which are so despised by the Roman aristocracy, are still preferable to joining the Parthian campaign. Propertius leaves that activity contemptuously to others.

His antagonism towards the military career is equally apparent in poem 3.12, addressed to his friend Postumus. He reproaches him for his callous desertion of his wife, Galla (3.12.1-6) :

"Postume, plorantem potuisti linquere Gallam,  
 miles et Augusti fortia signa sequi?  
 tantine ulla fuit spoliati gloria Parthi,  
 ne faceres Galla multa rogante tua?  
 si fas est, omnes pariter pereatis avari,  
 et quisquis fido praetulit arma toro!"

5

Once again the ideals of the public career are shown as a direct threat to private happiness. Propertius does not consider that "gloria" (3) and "virtus" (10) are worth the pain they cause. He shows that military service brings with it the separation of families and the threat of death

and bereavement (9ff.). The soldier is presented as greedy ("avari", 5), unfeeling and insane ("vesane", 8). And, worse than that, he is shown as directly contributing to the danger of moral decline by leaving his wife unprotected in the corrupt environment of Rome (17-18). Far from seeming admirable, he appears despicable. In order to hammer home his message of the futility of war Propertius upsets many of the stereotyped ideas of aristocratic morality. He dismisses the glory and emphasizes the danger, the greed and the cost in human suffering associated with the military career.

Propertius's defiance of traditional morality is given open expression in poem 2.30 where he exclaims (2.30.13-15) :

"ista senes licet accusent convivia duri:

nos modo propositum, vita, teramus iter.

illorum antiquis onerantur legibus aures."

Once again he places the lover's ideal of private happiness in opposition to the aristocratic ideal of the public career. The elegy is a difficult one, but disgust at the horrors involved in a military career seems to be clearly reflected in an obscure (and probably misplaced) couplet from it (2.30.21-22) :

"spargere et alterna communes caede Penates

et ferre ad patrios praemia dira Lares!"

Propertius appears to be rejecting the brutal aims of service in the army. Although the true context and correct

interpretation of the couplet have been the subject of considerable debate,<sup>17</sup> its opposition to war seems unmistakable.

Two poems remain which are of major importance in any discussion of Propertius's treatment of the public career - poems 3.11 and 4.6. Controversy has raged over both of them and there is a sharp division of opinion amongst critics as to whether or not they are seriously intended patriotic exercises.<sup>18</sup> Yet even if no firm conclusion can be reached, an examination may yield some significant results.

Both poems are concerned with Augustus's victory over Cleopatra, who is presented as a terrifying menace to Rome. In 3.11 Propertius leads into his attack on her obliquely. The poem begins with an attempt to justify his subservience to Cynthia on the grounds that women are formidable creatures. To back up this claim he recalls some of the impressive and alarming feats which they have performed. The exploits of Cleopatra form the climax of this catalogue. In contemplating them Propertius is distracted from his original theme and plunges into an account of her defeat by Augustus.

The poem opens with an accusation that Propertius is sunk in moral decline, shamefully subservient ("addictum", 2) to his mistress. He protests that he is unable to



escape and, after an excursion into mythology,<sup>19</sup> draws the parallel of the Roman Senate under threat of slavery to Cleopatra (3.11.31-32) :

"coniugis obsceni pretium Romana poposcit  
moenia et addictos in sua regna Patres."

Terror and hatred are apparent in his presentation of Cleopatra. She is shown as an ominous menace to Roman institutions, clinging to the outrageous aspiration (3.11.45-46) :

"foedaque Tarpeio conopia tendere saxo,  
iura dare et statuas inter et arma Mari."

and cowing the city (47-48). Augustus is hailed as the saviour of Rome (49-50) and Propertius places him in a gallery of Rome's most illustrious heroes, all of them protectors of the Roman way of life (61ff.). Indeed Augustus appears to outstrip them all in glory.

Traditionally this poem has been interpreted as serious, patriotic and motivated by genuine admiration of Augustus, but in 1936 Paratore challenged this view, arguing that the poem was critical of Augustus.<sup>20</sup> More recently Nethercut has suggested that it was written in a spirit of whimsical humour and is ironical in its treatment of Actium.<sup>21</sup> The nature of Propertius's attitudes to Augustus, although of major importance in an over-all assessment of his works is only of marginal relevance to this thesis.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless the question of the tone of the poem is important with regard to Propertius's treatment of the public career, quite apart from its implications for

his attitude to Augustus.

In spite of the evident hostility towards Cleopatra contained in it, I cannot accept the poem at its face value as an unqualified eulogy of Augustus. There are too many discordant undertones. The verbal echo between Propertius degraded and enslaved ("addictus", 2) to a woman and the "addictos ... Patres" of line 32 contains an implicit criticism of the Senate's weakness, while Propertius's constant harping on the shame of Rome's near defeat by a mere woman (36, 47-50, 57-58) belittles the grandeur of Augustus's victory. Moreover the rhetorical question "nunc ubi Scipiadae classes ..." (67ff.), rather than shedding greater glory on Augustus, tends to recall Propertius's comments elsewhere about the evanescence of military power and honour (e.g. 3.5.15). The position of the poem may also be significant since it is followed by 3.12, an elegy strongly critical of the personal misery caused by Augustus's campaigns. For these reasons it seems to me that, although Propertius is genuinely grateful for Rome's deliverance, his attitude to her cherished institutions, her senate, gods and heroes (including Augustus) is not one of uncritical admiration. On the contrary, it is tinged with irony and ambiguity. Furthermore his personal distaste for military conflict is as strong as ever. Margaret Hubbard points out perceptively :

"The magnitude of the rescue effected by Actium is elaborately expressed and Augustus exalted; yet the starting point of the poem is the poet's

inability to share any such heroic  
endeavours."<sup>23</sup>

Even when Propertius seems strongest in his defence of the aristocratic ideal, ambivalence and distaste lurk just below the surface.

Poem 4.6 has provoked equally acrimonious debate about Propertius's intentions.<sup>24</sup> Once again there is a lavish eulogy of Augustus and his victory at Actium. Propertius leads into his description of the battle with an elaborate preamble full of sacred rituals, which lends a solemn tone to the poem. He himself takes on the mantle of the "vates", the poet/priest, a semi-divine figure.<sup>25</sup> The whole poem gives the impression of being a genuinely patriotic piece in praise of Augustus, who is shown as motivated by intense patriotism and bearing (4.6.24) :

"signaque iam patriae vincere docta suae."

The reasons for applauding him are enumerated in Apollo's speech, which brims with fulsome praise for Augustus and the legitimacy of his cause (4.6.36-54) :

"mox ait "O Longa mundi servator ab Alba,

Auguste, Hectoreis cognite maior avis,

vince mari : iam terra tua est : tibi militat arcus

et favet ex umeris hoc onus omne meis.

solve metu patriam, quae nunc te vindice freta 40

imposuit prorae publica vota tuae.

quam nisi defendes, murorum Romulus augur

ire Palatinas non bene vidit aves.

et nimium remis audent prope : turpe Latinos

principe te fluctus regia vela pati. 45  
 nec te, quod classis centenis remiget alis,  
 terreat : invito labitur illa mari :  
 quodque vehunt prorae Centaurica saxa minantes,  
 tigna cava et pictos experiere metus.  
 frangit et attollit vires in milite causa; 50  
 quae nisi iusta subest, excutit arma pudor.  
 tempus adest, committe rates : ego temporis auctor  
 ducam laurigera Iulia rostra manu."

It is significant that Apollo hails Augustus as saviour of his country and praises him for being "maior avis." Augustus is presented as if he were some ancient Roman hero, even down to the cause for which he is fighting - Roman liberty under threat from a royal power (1.45-46). Apollo assures him of the justice of this cause (51-52) and even Julius Caesar, like some superannuated, doting parent is allowed to lean out from his star and exclaim fondly over the victory of his adopted son. However, after a round of clapping from the sea-goddesses grouped around Augustus's "libera signa" (62) and Cleopatra's retreat to the Nile (63), Propertius returns to "placidus ... choros" (70), leaving other campaigns (including the Parthian expedition) to other poets.

Tastes differ. Anglo-Saxon and European critics have been at loggerheads over the interpretation of this elegy, with debate centring on its tone and intention. Galinsky sums up thus :

"English critics are almost universally agreed on the frigidity of this poem whereas it is considered as the serious and noble expression of Propertius' pro-Augustan feeling even in recent German and Italian scholarship."<sup>26</sup>

The question of whether or not the poem is seriously intended has important implications for Propertius's treatment of the public career and the aristocratic ideal. On the side of the English, Sullivan calls it "the notorious elegy 6 on the battle of Actium" and suggests that Propertius wrote it to prove how bad he was at composing on national themes.<sup>27</sup> I find this theory delicious, but untenable. It seems to me far more likely that Propertius was attempting a "tour de force" to show how good he was at writing on national themes, before returning to his preferred subject of "convivia" (71). This is not to say that he is showing unqualified acceptance of Augustus and the aristocratic ideal even now. But it does seem that his open antagonism to them has softened.

It is difficult to blink the fact that there is a change in Propertius's approach to the public career in Book 4. This may be explained partly as a restless casting about for new literary directions.<sup>28</sup> However it is probably also, at least in part, a reflection of a genuine change in attitudes produced by subtle but incessant pressure from above. Baker points out that :

"as soon as his career was launched with the publication of the *Monobiblos*, and his reputation as a poet of outstanding ability established, Propertius was recruited into the literary circle of Maecenas and placed under some pressure to turn his talents to producing poetry that could be used as literary propaganda."<sup>29</sup>

This pressure by the Augustan regime is a continuation of the classic conduct of the Roman aristocracy towards writers. As was customary, pressure and persuasion were applied to the Augustan age writers to make them celebrate the aristocratic ideal of service to the state and glorify the exploits of the individual aristocrat. However Propertius's surrender to this pressure was never more than partial.<sup>30</sup>

The love elegists were caught in the web of tension which existed between the claims of the aristocracy and the claims of the genre in which they wrote. To Propertius these claims of genre were not merely literary in the strictest sense. They also involved loyalty to an ethos entirely different from that of the aristocracy, an ethos centred around peace, love and the abnegation of power and public office. With remarkable independence Propertius reshapes the traditional literary treatment of the public career. Instead of using this subject for straightforward eulogies of aristocratic exploits, he employs it for humour

and polemic, condemning the greed and cruelty of soldiers and glorifying the lifestyle of lovers, which had traditionally been seen as one of moral decadence. Even on the rare occasions when Propertius praises achievements in the service of the state, he usually qualifies his praise with irony, ambiguity or a firm re-statement of his own rejection of the public career.

There is little evidence of respect for the aristocratic ideal in the treatment of the public career in Ovid's love poetry. His approach to the subject is primarily humorous with occasional signs of serious antagonism towards the cherished values of the aristocracy. More than either of the other elegists he takes the reader into his confidence and explains his attitudes towards the public career and his intentions as an artist. This simplifies the task of assessing his handling of the public career.

After a brief preliminary epigram, the Amores opens with a statement of Ovid's literary intentions (Am. 1.1.1-4) :

"arma gravi numero violentaque bella paraban  
edere, materia conveniente modis.  
par erat inferior versus - risisse Cupido  
dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem."

There is a good deal of information packed into these four lines. Firstly Ovid draws a whimsical sketch of his own





ipse ego, praeda recens, factum modo vulnus habebo  
 et nova captiva vincula mente feram. 30  
 Mens Bona ducentur manibus post terga retortis,  
 et Pudor, et castris quidquid Amoris obest  
 omnia te metuent; ad te sua bracchia tendens  
 vulgus "io" magna voce "trumphe!" canet.  
 blanditiae comites tibi erunt Errorque Furorque, 35  
 adsidue partes turba secuta tuas.  
 his tu militibus superas hominesque deosque;  
 haec tibi si demas commoda, nudus eris."

This is followed by a picture of Venus applauding from Olympus, further details of the triumphal procession and Ovid's parting injunction to Cupid (Am. 1.2.49-52) :

"Ergo cum possim sacri pars esse triumphi,  
 parce tuas in me perdere, victor, opes!  
 adspice cognati felicia Caesaris arma -  
 qua vicit victos protegit ille manu."

This elegy is very important for an understanding of Ovid's treatment of the aristocratic ideal, because of both its position and content. Galinsky rightly points out that :

"The poem takes on a certain significance by its very position, as it stands immediately after the introductory elegy." 32

Consequently it acts as something of a programme piece and sets the tone for the rest of the Amores. It is an amusing

poem in its own right, but it also serves to announce the subjects which are to be the major targets of Ovid's wit in the rest of the Amores. Chief among these is the institution of the triumph and, by implication, the public career of which it was the climax. Ovid lampoons the triumph by transferring it from the public sphere to the private world of love. All the grandiose terminology traditionally used to describe a genuine triumph is retained, but Cupid takes the part of the triumphant general, while the captives are replaced by the disreputable figures of Ovid and others. Ovid adds fuel to the fire by placing himself in the company of the personified virtues of "Mens Bona" and "Pudor" - a masterly ironical touch, since he is bent on their downfall. Moreover, by allotting to Cupid the companionship of "Errorque Furorque" (35), he throws a suggestive taunt at the real generals. Thus one of the main functions of the poem is to satirize the aristocracy and its most hallowed institution.

Significantly, Ovid also has some fun at the expense of that most eminent moral revivalist, Augustus. Augustus was known to have permitted the stories which linked his family via Julius Caesar and Ascanius with the goddess Venus,<sup>33</sup> but such an irreverent characterization of Venus as Ovid's (particularly in her applause at the downfall of "Mens Bona" and "Pudor" and the progress of Cupid's triumph) is wholly unprecedented and makes Augustus look absurd by association. In case there should be any doubt

as to his intentions, Ovid even throws in a light-hearted reminder of Augustus's relationship with Cupid, linking it to an exhortation to Cupid to protect lovers with his power, as his kinsman has protected the vanquished with his arms. Ovid's mockery of the nobility is thus extended to one of its most cherished legends.

This farcical approach to the public career and to moral issues is continued with rare exceptions throughout the Amores. Its next manifestation is in Ovid's paraclausithyron, Amores 1.6, where military terminology is employed in an unexpected way. Ovid uses it precisely in order to underline his own unwarlike nature. He describes vividly his initial timidity and the bestowal of courage by Venus and Cupid which makes him brave enough to go out at night (Am. 1.6.11-14) :

"At quondam noctem simulacraque vana  
mirabar, tenebris quisquis iturus erat.  
risit, ut audirem, tenera cum matre Cupido  
et leviter "fies tu quoque fortis" ait."

Although he claims to have acquired bravery, Ovid continues to emphasize his own harmless nature. Thus he reproaches the janitor for keeping the house closed in a way fit only for cities under siege (Am. 1.6.29-30) :

"urbibus obsessis clausae munimina portae  
prosunt; in media pace quid arma times?"

and then seeks to show his own innocuous nature by pleading (Am. 1.6.33-34 / 37-39) :

"Non ego militibus venio comitatus et armis;

solus eram, si non saevus adesset Amor ...

ergo Amor et modicum circa mea tempora vinum

mecum est et madidis lapsa corona comis.

arma quis haec timeat? quis non eat obvius illis?"

Even though he later threatens to assault the door

"ferroque ignique" (Am. 1.6.57 ), in the end the only

object he casts on the threshold is the garland of flowers,

which in line 38 he has mentioned as a sign of his peaceful

intentions. By introducing the terminology of camp and

battlefield into his description of the far from hazardous

vigil of the lover Ovid achieves an effect of whimsical

humour. The distance between the world of lover and

soldier is brilliantly captured, while real war and suffer-

ing are shut out of the poem as firmly as the lover is shut

out of his mistress's house. The terminology of war is

skilfully shaped to create an atmosphere of peace.

In Amores 1.7 Ovid returns to the imagery of the triumph, using it to describe the excessive force which he has employed against his mistress. He addresses himself contemptuously (Am. 1.7.35-40) :

"nunc, magnificos victor molire triumphos,

cinge comam lauro votaque redde Iovi,

quaeque tuos currus comitatus turba sequetur,

clamet "io! forti victa puella viro est!"

ante eat effuso tristis captiva capillo,

si sinerent laesae, candida tota, genae."

The imagery which Ovid uses is so grandiose that it has the effect of making his protests of overwhelming remorse appear absurd and insincere. In a torrent of self-recrimination he likens himself not only to a triumphant general but also to mythical heroes (7ff.) and common criminals (22, 27ff.). Fränkel is convinced of the sincerity of this and comments charitably :

"As he looks back upon what he has done, his deed is exaggerated beyond all due proportion and in the abandon of his repentance he penetrates to an unusual depth of feeling." <sup>34</sup>

I cannot share Fränkel's charity. It seems to me that Ovid is deliberately using these extravagant military and legal analogies to make both the lover and the public career appear absurd.

The most comprehensive use of military imagery in the context of Ovid's love poetry appears in Amores 1.9, where he expounds the theme of "the lover as a soldier". This motif was already firmly established in love elegy,<sup>35</sup> but Ovid nonetheless traces the parallels between lover and soldier in exhaustive detail. Some of the similarities he invents are ingenious and entertaining and there is some amusing "double entendre" in lines 25-30 :

"saepe maritorum somnis utuntur amantes,  
et sua sopitis hostibus arma movent.  
custodum transire manus vigilumque catervas  
militis et miseri semper amantis opus.

Mars dubius nec certa Venus; victique resurgunt,  
quosque neques unquam posse iacere, cadunt."

but the poem hovers on the edge of tedium. As L. P. Wilkinson points out :

"Ovid could rarely refrain from sowing with the  
sac: instead of the hand." <sup>36</sup>

and the motif is treated so exhaustively both here and in the remainder of the Amores and the Ars amatoria that it does become trite and repetitious. Yet, even if it is not always successful as a humorous device, Ovid's intention in using the motif is clearly to have fun at the expense of the army.

The image of a camp of love under the generalship of Cupid re-appears in the Amores in at least two other poems which are obviously humorous in intent - Amores 1.11 and 2.9. In Am. 1.11.11-12, Ovid salutes his messenger Hape as a comrade in arms :

"credibile est et te sensisse Cupidinis arcus -  
in me militiae signa tuere tuae!"

while in Amores 2.9 the image of an army under the command of Cupid is developed at greater length. In the first half of the poem Ovid begs a respite from the arrows of Cupid, but in the second half, with an abrupt change of stance, he begs to continue loving. He opens the poem with a reproach to Cupid (Am. 2.9.1-4) :

"o numquam pro me satis indignate Cupido,  
       o in corde meo desidiose puer -  
 quid me, qui miles numquam tua signa reliqui,  
       laedis, et in castris vulneror ipse meis?"

He heightens the absurdity of this complaint by elevating it, if not quite to the cosmic sphere, at least to the level of international politics and diplomacy. Not content with seeing himself as a wounded soldier, he identifies himself with an entire conquered race and, like some ambassador lodging a respectful, official complaint, protests (Am. 2.9.11) :

"nos tua sentimus populus tibi deditus arma."

This use of high-flown diplomatic and military terminology is continued in the advice to Cupid which follows (Am. 2.9.15-16) :

"tot sine amore viri tot sunt sine amore puellae!  
       hinc tibi cum magna laude triumphus eat."

Ovid even has the temerity to offer the achievement of Rome in extending her empire as an example for Cupid to emulate (Am. 2.9.17-18) :

"Roma, nisi immensum vires movisset in orbem,  
       stramineis esset nunc quoque tecta casis."

However in the second half of the poem there is a slick reversal of these arguments and Ovid begs instead (Am. 2.9.35 ) :

"fige, puer! positus nudus tibi praebear armis."

He ends this poem with a prayer for the establishment of the kingdom of Cupid and Venus in his heart, promising them adoration from two submissive nations - Ovid himself and women.

The florid imagery of conquest and empire which Ovid uses in this poem is clearly not intended to lend dignity to the lover. Quite the opposite. By transferring the terminology of triumph, diplomacy and empire to the absurd and incongruous subject of his own sufferings in love, Ovid not only draws attention to his own irreverent, rakish character, but also deflates the grandeur of Rome's real conquests and empire.

In Amores 2.12 the aristocratic ideal suffers further assault. This time Ovid returns to his favourite theme of the triumph, but it is no mere enemy of Rome he has conquered. It is Corinna. This victory is celebrated in language worthy of a genuine triumph. The poem opens with a flourish (Am. 2.12.1-2) :

"Ite triumphales circum mea tempora laurus!  
vicimus .... "

and then proceeds to satirize many of the details of a real triumph. Thus the "hostes" whom the valiant Ovid has overcome are not mere soldiers, but "vir ... custos ... ianua firma" (3) and the booty he has won is equally impressive (7-8) :

"non humiles muri, non parvis oppida fossis  
cincta, sed est ductu capta puella meo!"



Moreover his "gloria" (12) is all the greater in not being shared by anyone else, since (13-14) :

"me duce ad hanc vóti finem, me milite veni;

ipse eques, ipse pedes, signifer ipse fui."

He manages to find some astonishing parallels to his action in legend, boldly comparing his struggle to win Corinna with the battles fought over Helen of Troy, Lavinia and the Sabine women. There is a typically Ovidian distortion of hallowed Roman legend in his outrageous comment on the rape of the Sabines (23-24) :

"femina Romanis etiannunc urbe recenti

inmisit soceros armaque saeva dedit."

After a striking but inapposite Vergilian echo (25-26),<sup>37</sup> he ends the poem with a re-affirmation of his allegiance to Cupid.

This brief, amusing poem draws most of its humour from its mockery of the aristocratic ideal. Ovid dresses up as a heroic general, borrows a suitably pompous tone and spouts bombastic nonsense. By applying the vocabulary of the triumph to his victory over Corinna he makes the real generals and triumphs seem wholly ludicrous. Thus he attacks the aristocratic ideal with the weapons of the aristocrats' own characteristic terminology and regalia. Although the primary aim of this is surely humour, there is a hint of the typical elegist's opposition to war in Ovid's repeated assertions that his triumphs are bloodless

("sanguine praeda caret", 6; "me sine caede", 27). The light-hearted foolery thus seems to conceal a genuine humane objection to war.

The military career is not the only aspect of the aristocratic ideal which comes under fire from Ovid in the Amores. He also employs his wit against the law, using a variety of means to make lawyers and the legal profession seem ridiculous. He makes disparaging comments about lawyers, he uses the terminology of law in ludicrously inapposite circumstances and he presents certain scenes of his love affair as parodies of legal situations.

His hostility towards lawyers first surfaces in Amores 1.12, where he heaps curses on the tablets which have brought a refusal from his mistress. After a series of imprecations, detailing the vile origins which their wax and wood undoubtedly had, he cries (Am. 1.12.23-26) :

"aptius haec capiant vadimonia garrula cerae,  
 quas aliquis duro cognitor ore legat;  
 inter ephemeridas melius tabulasque iacerent,  
 in quibus absumptas fleret avarus opes."

The primary aim of this poem is to give a swift, amusing sketch of a petulant lover's tantrum, but Ovid also delivers a telling shot at the legal profession in passing. The bare suggestion that double-dealing tablets, cut from a gibbet and coated in the wax of the hemlock flower, are fit for lawyers to use is, in itself, a graphic comment on the

image which he wishes the legal profession to present in his works.

This is followed up by an even more antagonistic treatment of lawyers in Amores 1.13, the elegy addressed to the Dawn. In this Ovid reproaches Aurora for her early arrival and presents a catalogue of the distasteful labours which people must commence when day breaks. Perhaps in order to underline the tedium and unpleasantness of legal affairs, he inserts them in this catalogue immediately after a description of the beatings endured by schoolboys (Am. 1.13.17-22) :

"tu pueros somno fraudas tradisque magistris,  
 ut subeant tenerae verbera saeva manus;  
 atque eadem sponsum multos ante antria mittis,  
 unius ut verbi grandia damna ferant.  
 nec tu consulto, nec tu iucunda diserto;  
 cogitur ad lites surgere uterque novas."

The similarity in grammatical structure in lines 18 and 20 helps to emphasize the parallels between schoolboys and sponsors, while the verbal echo between the "verbera" inflicted by the teacher (18) and the "verbi" of the judge (20) subtly hints at a resemblance between the judge and a nasty schoolmaster armed with a cane. Lawyers, like soldiers (14) and teachers, appear as grim adversaries of enjoyment, whose lifestyles are in direct opposition to the lazy pleasures of the lover. Playfulness is the dominant note of the poem, but it also contains an implicit

rejection of the boredom, cruelty and rigidity of the dynamic work ethic cherished by the aristocracy. Ovid shows unmistakable distaste for most of the activities applauded by traditional moralists - among them the labour of soldiers (14), farmers (15), lawyers (19-20) and women working in wool (23-24). As for himself, he evinces no greater ambition than to lie in late in the morning with his girlfriend, listening to birdsong (5-8). Thus, within the framework of his reproach to Aurora, Ovid evokes brilliantly the tension between the traditional Roman ethos and that of the lover.<sup>38</sup>

There are several occasions in the love poetry when Ovid seems to employ the technical language of law deliberately for humorous effect, but his use of legal terminology is generally fleeting and plays no central part in most of the poems.<sup>39</sup> However a major exception to this occurs in the paired elegies Amores 2.7 and 2.8, which constitute a sustained parody of a trial.<sup>40</sup> In the first of these poems Ovid's spirited and witty self-defence on a charge of infidelity is cast in a form closely resembling the speech of an accused person on trial. He begins with a cry of outraged innocence (Am. 2.7.1-2) :

"Ergo sufficiam reus in nova crimina semper?

ut vincam, totiens dimicuisse piget."

He then goes on to give the grounds of former accusations (2-10), renews his plea of innocence (Am. 2.7.11-12) :

"atque ego peccati vellem mihi conscius essem!

aequo animo poenam, qui meruere, ferunt."

and finally specifies the nature of the present accusation  
(Am. 2.7.17-18) :

"Ecce, novum crimen! Sollers ornare Cypassis  
obicitur dominae contemerasse torum."

He concludes with an extremely persuasive defence and an  
oath of innocence (Am. 2.7.27-28) :

"per Venerem iuro puerique volatilis arcus,  
me non admissi criminis esse reum!"

His success in winning his case is made all the more enter-  
taining by the discovery in the next poem (Amores 2.8) that  
he was actually guilty.

The humour here derives from Ovid's masterly charac-  
terization of the glib, resourceful, treacherous, light-  
hearted lover and from the hilarious parody of serious legal  
procedure. Although these two poems contain no direct  
attack on the aristocratic ideal, they definitely undermine  
it in a subtle way. Oratory was taken very seriously in  
Rome and impassioned speeches of self-defence in the law-  
courts had played an important part in the careers of  
several eminent Romans.<sup>41</sup> By transferring the formal  
structure and idiom of such speeches to the farcical world  
of lovers' deceits and intrigues, Ovid demolishes the  
dignity of more serious defendants and law-courts.

A similar ploy is used in Amores 2.17, where Ovid  
mounts another oblique attack on society's institutions.

In this poem he draws a vivid picture of his slavish subjugation to Corinna. With exaggerated servility he exclaims (Am. 2.17.1-2) :

"siquis erit, qui turpe putet servire puellae,  
illo convincar iudice turpis ego!"

and goes on to beg for mercy from Corinna, using highly-coloured analogies from myth to describe his plight. Corinna herself is pictured in terms suitable to a ruler of the state (she is marked by "omina regni", 11) and Ovid frames his surrender to her in a remarkable style, begging her (Am. 2.17.23-24) :

"tu quoque, mea lux, in quaslibet accipe leges;  
te deceat medio iura dedisse foro."

To a Roman audience this would undoubtedly have seemed outrageous mockery of a serious activity. And it is clearly intended to undermine the dignity of the real law-givers. It also serves the purpose of reinforcing Ovid's characterization of himself as an anti-hero, embodying the worst symptoms of moral decline in his indifference to the state and his shameless surrender to lust and sloth.

It might well be asked at this point whether Ovid ever treated the subject of the public career with anything more than the blithest irreverence. In fact there are several poems in the Amores which show that he did. The most important of these are poems 1.15, 1.10 and 3.8.

Amores 1.15 is an intensely interesting poem, occupying a significant position at the close of Book 1. Throughout the Amores Ovid uses the opening and closing poem of each book for serious commentary on his literary intentions and achievements.<sup>42</sup> Now, after an entire bookful of humour, he takes the opportunity to deliver a serious manifesto on his life as a love poet. He begins with an eminently reasonable and cogent self-defence for his failure to enter public life<sup>43</sup> (Am. 1.15.1-8) :

"Quid mihi, Livor edax, ignavos obicis annos,  
ingenique vocas carmen inertis opus;  
non me more patrum, dum strenua sustinet aetas,  
praemia militiae pulverulenta sequi,  
nec me verbosas leges ediscere nec me  
ingrato vocem praestituisse foro?  
mortale est, quod quaeris, opus. mihi fama perennis  
quaeritur, in toto semper ut orbe canar."

5

He goes on to cite the enduring fame of all the major poets of Greece and Rome and re-affirms the immortality and might of poetry. The poem closes with his own triumphant claim to eternal glory.

The elegy reflects the conflict between the demands of the aristocratic ideal and Ovid's sense of the poet's mission and shows very clearly his attitudes to both. The pejorative adjectives which he applies to the public career (its prizes are "pulverulenta", its laws "verbosas", its forum "ingrato") clearly indicate that he found it

boring and distasteful. Moreover he obviously found it threatening. For once Ovid drops his pose of gleeful "nequitia" and speaks out seriously against the philistinism of the aristocratic ideal. He protests vigorously about the attempts to press him into the public career and reveals his resentment of the labels of "ignavia" and "inertia" which society attached to the poet. His impassioned defence of his calling includes a serious, lucid rejection of the aristocratic ideal of the public career.

There are two other poems in the Amores in which Ovid's approach to the public career is serious. In Amores 1.10 he introduces analogies borrowed from the public career into an attack on his mistress's greed. After reproaching her at length for her avarice, he comments (Am. 1.10.37-42) :

"non bene conducti vendunt periuria testes,  
non bene selecti iudicis arca patet.  
turpe reos empti miseros defendere lingua;  
quod faciat magnas, turpe tribunal, opes;  
turpe tori reditu census augere paternos,  
et faciem lucro prostituisset suam."

This disapproval of corruption in the public career seems to be entirely serious, for there are none of Ovid's characteristic humorous devices in the poem. For once he seems to be in sympathy with the historians in censuring corruption in public life.



Similarly in Amores 3.8 Ovid passes from a conventional complaint about feminine greed and a rich rival to a serious attack on corruption in public life. The poem opens with a denunciation of modern greed and barbarism, which are unfavourably contrasted with former attitudes to poetry (Am. 3.8.1-4) :

"et quisquam ingenuas etiamnunc suspicit artes,  
aut tenerum dotes carmen habere putat?  
ingenium quondam fuerat pretiosius auro;  
at nunc barbaria est grandis habere nihil."

It then goes on to attack Ovid's rival. The details of this attack are extremely interesting. Ovid includes the conventional complaints that his rival is "recondite" and has won his knighthood by service in the army (9), but he then goes on to deliver a reproach based more on humane scruples than on class distinction. He points out that the rival is "sanguine pastus" (10) and insistently reminds the girl of the slaughter the other has taken part in (Am. 3.8.16-18) :

" .... dextram tange - cruenta fuit!  
qua periit aliquis, potes hanc contingere dextram?  
heu, ubi mollities pectoris illa tui?"

Cynically Ovid advises others to learn the arts of war rather than of poetry - as being more rewarding. Then, after a brief, nostalgic glance at the Golden Age, when wealth was hidden under the earth, he launches into a spirited attack on greed for power and money and the

evils which follow in its train. He builds up to an impressive climax, attacking human arrogance and the corruption of public life and bitterly but hopelessly acceding to the rule of those who have bought their way into power (Am. 3.3.44-58) :

"contra te sollers, hominum natura, fuisti  
 et nimium damnis ingeniosa tuis.  
 quo tibi, turritis incingere moenibus urbes?  
 quo tibi, discordes addere in arma manus?  
 quid tibi cum pelago - terra contenta fuisses!  
 cur non et caelum, tertia regna, petis?  
 qua licet, adfectas caelum quoque - templa Quirinus  
 Liber et Alcides et modo Caesar habent.  
 eruinus terra solidum pro frugibus aurum.  
 possidet inventas sanguine miles opes.  
 curia pauperibus clausa est - dat census honores;  
 inde gravis iudex, inde severus eques!  
 omnia possideant; illis Campusque Forumque  
 serviat, hi pacem crudaque bella gerant - "

This really has nothing to do with the ostensible subject of the poem - the preference of girls for rich lovers - and in the following lines Ovid is forced to make a rather awkward transition to return to the initial theme of the poem (Am. 3.2.59-60) :

"tantum ne nostros avidi liceantur amores,  
 et - satis est - aliquid pauperis esse sinant."

This brings him back to the familiar elegiac topics of the impoverished lover, the jealous husband and the girl under

guard, so that he is able to end the poem with a prayer to the "deus ultor amantis" (65), begging for help.

This poem is probably the most significant treatment of the subjects of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline in all of Ovid's work. In some respects it resembles the traditional accounts of moral decline found in the works of Sallust and Livy, but the resemblance is largely superficial. Like the historians Ovid blames wealth for the moral decline of his own day and denounces the purchase of rank and office as one of the major symptoms of decadence (55-56). However the contrast between past and present drawn by Ovid is fundamentally different from that made by the historians.

Ovid sees moral decline as taking place in two spheres - private and public. In the private sphere early society is pictured not as combining austerity with religion and family solidarity, but as combining material simplicity with a humane outlook and a civilized regard for the arts (1-4). This is a very different view of the past from the traditional one. Ovid's concept of private moral decline in contemporary times also differs from the traditional view, being marked not by a straightforward decline in religious observance and feminine chastity, but by a more complex fall from grace. Certainly he complains about the girl's greed and promiscuity (both traditional symptoms of moral decline), but he seems even more disturbed by her lapse from humane, cultured standards of

behaviour. In Ovid's view compassion and culture are the real victims of moral decline, not piety and feminine purity.

In the public sphere Ovid does not present early society as warlike, but pictures it in the terms of the mythical Golden Age as a rural community living a tranquil existence with no wealth, agriculture, property or ships.<sup>44</sup> He attacks modern society because it is so different from this Golden Age Utopia. He seems to be opposed not only to the corruption which exists in contemporary public life, but also to the whole ethos of the public career. He criticizes all the frenetic activity of modern life which is associated with the public career - the building of fortifications (47), seafaring (49), the raising of temples to gods and heroes (51-52)<sup>45</sup> and the scramble for money (53), war (54) and power (55-56). The poem thus follows a standard elegiac pattern of placing in opposition two codes of moral values - the code of the lover (the "purus ... sacerdos", 23), marked by peace, compassion and culture and the code of the public career, marked by corruption and bloodshed. Significantly, the activities of the public career are denounced as manifestations of moral decline.

In its handling of structure and themes the poem is not very successful, although it is very revealing. Indeed Ovid seems to have been carried away by his own fervour.

The long central digression on moral issues spoils the unity of the poem and dramatically alters its tone. What begins as a light-hearted complaint about a rival turns into an impassioned diatribe against contemporary society. Given the complete absence of Ovid's characteristic humorous diction in this section, it seems that it should be taken seriously as a genuine indictment of the whole ethos of the public career.

In the vast majority of poems in the Anores Ovid uses the public career as a subject for fun, lampooning its most cherished institutions and transferring its terminology to absurd contexts. However the few poems in which he approaches the subject seriously reflect an underlying antagonism to the aristocratic ideal of winning glory through the public career. This antagonism seems to be founded partly on personal distaste for the activities of the public career and partly on a genuine humane objection to the bloodshed often associated with it.

In the Ars amatoria and Remedia Amoris Ovid continues his humorous attacks on the aristocratic ideal, but he makes few, if any, serious statements about the public career. The tone of these two poems is uniformly light and Ovid uses several of his characteristic literary devices to intensify the humour. Chief among these is his reversal of expected moral values and attitudes, which is reinforced by parody, burlesque and the use of military and legal terminology in absurd contexts.

One of the funniest tricks Ovid plays in the Ars amatoria is to recommend the activities of the public career not for the glory they will bring, but for their utility to the lover. Thus in Book 1 he recommends the lawcourts as a rewarding hunting ground for lovers and then goes on to picture the plight of the eloquent lawyer turned lover and forced to plead a new case - his own (A.A. 1.79-88) :

"et fora conveniunt (quis credere possit?) amori:  
 flammaque in arguto saepe reperta foro:  
 subdita qua Veneris facto de marmore templo  
 Appias expressis aëra pulsat aquis,  
 illo saepe loco capitur consultus Amori,  
 quique aliis cavit, non cavet ipse sibi:  
 illo saepe loco desunt sua verba disertis,  
 resque novae veniunt, causaque agenda sua est.  
 hunc Venus e templis, quae sunt confinia, ridet:  
 qui modo patronus, nunc cupit esse cliens."

The humour in this passage springs from two sources - the dispersal of the aura of dignity surrounding the forum and the characterization of the lawyer. Ovid uses a characteristic series of antitheses to turn the lawyer into a figure of fun. He is careful about other people, but not about himself, he is usually eloquent, but now he is lost for words, he used to be an advocate, but now he wants to be a client. His loss of status is neatly accentuated in the final line. In the transformation from "patronus" to "cliens" the lawyer, by implication, loses his dignity and

becomes servile, anxious and sycophantic. Venus's laughter is surely meant to be shared by the reader.

Ovid returns to the subject of rhetoric with the same sly humour later in Book 1. In this case young men are urged to study oratory specifically for the purpose of wooing women more persuasively (A.A. 1.459-462) :

"disce bonas artes, moneo, Romana iuventus,  
non tantum trepidos ut tucare reos;  
quam populus iudexque gravis lectusque senatus,  
tam dabit eloquio victa puella manus."

The pomposity of the tone he adopts intensifies the burlesque effect of the admonition. Moreover this is further enriched by parody, for as E. J. Kenney points out :

"the solemn allocution at 1.459 to "Romana iuventus" recalls Ennius ..."<sup>46</sup>

Even without the added spice of such a literary echo, the sheer temerity of the comparison between the "victa puella" and the "iudexque gravis lectusque senatus" severely threatens the dignity of the latter.

Ovid is even more lavish in his use of military imagery in the Ars amatoria. He makes fun of the army on every possible occasion, employing military terminology in the most absurd circumstances and continuing the practice, begun in the Amores, of using the triumph as a

subject for burlesque. In all his extensive borrowing of military themes and terminology the army is rarely, if ever, mentioned with anything but contempt or amusement.

Much of the military imagery in the Ars amatoria centres around the theme, already familiar from the Amores, of the lover as a soldier. As in the earlier work, the lover is often portrayed as an anti-hero. Thus in Book 1, Ovid (who has now promoted himself from the rank of "miles" to "dux" in the service of love) reassures his followers that he will not demand of them any of the arduous and dangerous heroics which real soldiers have to perform (A.A. 1.381-382) :

"non ego per praecepta et acuta cacumina vadam,  
nec iuvenum quisquam me duce captus erit."

Given the absurdity of the context (Ovid is talking about the hazards involved in seducing one's mistress's maid), this grandiose language has an effect of total bathos.

The major points of the analogy between lover and soldier are recapitulated in A.A. 2.233-238 :

"militiae species amor est; discedite, segnes:  
non sunt haec timidis signa tuenda viris.  
non et hiems longaeque viae saevique dolores      235  
mollibus his castris et labor omnis inest.  
saepe ferēs imbrem caelesti nube solutum,  
frigidus et nuda saepe iacebis humo."

This is a typical Ovidian reversal of traditional stereo-



types about the lover. Traditionally the lover was seen as "segnis", but Ovid warns away the "seguēs" and presents the lover as a heroic figure full of stamina and endurance. However a glance at the context reveals the somewhat less than terrifying nature of the lover's "dolores" and "labor". He will have to carry parasols (209), fetch footstools (211), walk into town at his mistress's bidding (229-230) and perhaps scramble into her house by the odd roof or high window (245-246). To classify such degrading activities under the title of the military virtue of "labor" is a calculated insult to traditional moral sentiment.

Ovid delivers an even more outrageous affront to traditional moral sentiment by applying military terminology to women. Thus in A.A. 1.66 he comments with approval on the "agmen" of women in Rome from whom the lover can choose. And, in a memorable exhortation, he advises girls to arrange their lovers as a general arranges his troops to make best use of their capabilities (A.A. 3.527-530) :

"duri bonus huic centum commisit vite regēdos,  
huic equites, illi signa tuenda dedit:  
vos quoque, de nobis quem quisque erit aptus ad usum,  
inspicite, et certo ponite quemque loco."

A. S. Hollis even detects an allusion to Augustus in these lines, pointing out that the phrase "duri bonus" had been used by Horace to describe the emperor in Odes 4.5.5 and 37.<sup>47</sup> If this very convincing suggestion be accepted, then the lines take on even more point as a sly hit at the aristocracy. And in case there should be any doubt about

his attitude to the aristocratic ideal, Ovid goes on to reject the public career emphatically, claiming that poets are above it (A.A. 3.541-546) :

"nec nos ambitio, nec amor nos tangit habendi:  
 contempto colitur lectus et umbra foro.  
 sed facile haeremus, validoque perurimur aestu,  
 et nimium certa scimus amare fide.  
 scilicet ingenium placida molliitur ab arte,  
 et studio mores convenienter eunt."

The characterization of poets here is very significant. All the love elegists to some extent present themselves as a peace party. In the Amores Ovid had more than once rejected military glory and proclaimed his allegiance to peace (e.g. Am. 2.10.31-32 and Am. 3.2.49-50) and now he contrasts the ambitious, greedy outlook of the men who dominate the forum with the gentle, humane nature of poets. One should be wary about accepting Ovid's claims "certa ... amare fide" (544), but his distaste for the public career seems genuine enough, since it tallies with the serious statements he makes elsewhere (T. 4.3.7-8; 4.10.36ff.).

The other important use of military imagery in the Ars amatoria is in Ovid's handling of the triumph. The triumph formed the climax of the public career and was "one of the most venerable, highly coveted and awe-inspiring Roman institutions."<sup>48</sup> In the Amores Ovid had used it extensively as a subject for burlesque. He returns to it in the Ars amatoria with a rather different approach. In A.A. 1.177-223 Ovid pictures at considerable

length the triumph which he expects Gaius Caesar to celebrate over the Parthians. Fulsome praise of Gaius is interspersed with prophecies of victory and assertions of the justice of his cause. Ovid commends the "virtus" (134) of Gaius and claims that "iusque piumque" (200) accompany him in his cause. Critics differ in their interpretation of the passage but, although Galinsky sees it as anti-Augustan, most agree that the eulogy is seriously intended.<sup>49</sup> Yet even in this lavish flattery there are a few discordant lines. It is noteworthy, for instance, that Ovid compares Gaius to Bacchus in

A.A. 1.139-190:

"nunc quoque qui puer es, quantus tum, Bacche, fuisti,  
cum timuit thyrsos India victa tuos?"

which is suspiciously reminiscent of the comparison made between Bacchus and Cupid in the mock triumph of Am.

1.2.47 :

"talis erat domita Bacchus Gangetide terra?"

Moreover the passage is inserted into a lecture on the art of picking up women - a fact which tends to diminish its gravity.

In the Remedia Amoris Ovid's treatment of the public career is consistently humorous. Much of this humour is derived from his skilful reversal of the precepts of the other love poems. This does not imply any sort of recantation by Ovid as early critics suggested, but rather is a witty extension of the technique which Ovid employs in the Amores, involving a lavish use of incongruous

imagery and a determination to use every possible entertaining variation of any motif. He also makes considerable use of Vergilian and Lucretian echoes ("almost one might say the Devil quoting Scripture"<sup>50</sup>) and adopts a magisterial tone which is totally at variance with his subject matter and therefore very funny. His diatribe against "otium" is masterly. Like some stern Roman moralist he exhorts his followers (R.A. 136-138) :

" fac monitis fugias otia prima meis.

haec, ut ames, faciunt, haec quod facere tuentur;

haec sunt iucundi causa cibusque mali."

After a comprehensive warning about the sources of temptation facing a young man, he puts forward the only possible salvation - hard work in a public career (R.A. 151-154) :

"sunt fora, sunt leges, sunt quos tuearis, amici:

vade per urbanae splendida castra togae,

vel tu sanguinei iuvenalia munera Martis

suspice : deliciae iam tibi terga dabunt."

As an alternative, he recommends enlisting for the Parthian campaign, offering the suitably enticing slogan (R.A. 157-158) :

"vince Cupidineas pariter Parthasque sagittas,

et refer ad patrios bina tropaea deos."

Agriculture, hunting and travel are recommended as further remedies for persistent cases of affliction.

The humour in Ovid's treatment of the public career in the Remedia Amoris lies in the implicit belittling of

the importance of work in the lawcourts or the army. Ovid never presents these as important valuable activities in their own right but merely as useful aids in killing off a disreputable, worn out love affair. The implication is that they are activities on much the same level as such an affair, although rather less important. Ovid thus deflates the dignity of the traditional aristocratic institutions and, most amusing of all, he uses the typical form and content of the aristocrats' own moral diatribes to do so.

Throughout the love poetry Ovid sustains the pose of considering love to be a highly serious and important activity. This shift in focus from the normal point of view in Latin literature is accompanied by a deliberate distortion of many other traditional values which made up the aristocratic ideal. The most cherished virtues and institutions of the public career, instead of being treated with reverence, become primary targets for humour in his works. He achieves this humour by a variety of means. Chief among these are direct literary parody of serious writers such as Vergil and Lucretius, burlesque of public institutions such as the triumph and the use of imagery and terminology associated with the public career in absurd contexts in the private sphere of love. Although Ovid's treatment of the public career is almost always light-hearted, there is evidence to suggest that this humorous approach is based on a personal distaste for the activities of the public career and a genuine humanitarian opposition to its entire ethos.

Ovid shares many of his attitudes with his predecessors. Although there are a few passages where Tibullus and Propertius show respect for the exploits of individuals in the public career, their general approach to the subject is, like Ovid's, either humorous or antagonistic.. All three writers significantly re-shape the aristocratic ideal. On a humorous level they do this chiefly by transposing the dignified terminology of the public career to the absurd context of a love affair. On a more serious level they question the validity of the whole ethos of the public career, setting up in opposition to it the ethos of the lover, whose values are triumphantly vindicated. While the life of the lover emerges as peaceful and blameless, the aristocratic ideal of prowess in war is condemned as cruel and inhuman, a sign not of supreme moral excellence but of gross moral decline.

## Chapter 6

### The literary functions of the aristocratic ideal and the theme of moral decline in love elegy.

Some attempt has been made to show how the love elegists transformed the aristocratic moral ideal and the traditional view of moral decline. It now remains to consider why they did so and what literary functions these subjects have in their works. In order to do this it will be necessary first to glance briefly at the major influences which shaped their handling of these subjects, namely the political, social and literary climate of their own times and the influence of the genre. It should then be possible to assess their individual literary intentions and to relate the handling of the aristocratic ideal and the motif of moral decline to each writer's works as a whole.

In many respects aristocratic Roman society at this time probably remained much as it had always been - devoted to the pursuit of power and wealth through politics and the army, and contemptuous of the activities of the poet.<sup>1</sup> However the most important single feature of the political and social background was undoubtedly the Augustan regime. The impact of this regime on Latin love elegy is a major topic in itself and it would obviously be impossible in a thesis of this kind to give it the attention it deserves. In any case it is doubtful whether the precise nature and extent of its influence on elegy could ever be established,

since so many complex factors are involved in the question. Nevertheless a few points about the Augustan regime should perhaps be made.

In the first place there is the question of how the elegists regarded Augustus. Most critics have been content to view the elegists as if they were political journalists and to classify them as either pro- or anti-Augustan.<sup>2</sup> Such an approach seems too narrow to me. On their own admission the elegists shunned public life (Tib. 1.1.25-26, Prop. 1.6.25-26, Ovid, Am. 1.15.1-6) and it seems more than likely that they viewed Augustus not as an individual politician, whom they were concerned to support or oppose, but rather as the pre-eminent representative of the aristocratic ideal, to which their attitudes were ambivalent. As such, Augustus supplied them with material for praise (Propertius, 4.6), parody (Ovid, A.A. 1.131-132; 3.527ff.) and protest (Propertius, 2.15.43-44).

Secondly, in discussing the influence of the Augustan regime, there is the question of how far it is legitimate to delve into the details of the elegists' lives for clues to the understanding of their works. On the one hand Cherniss has exposed the dangers of an overly zealous biographical approach to literature,<sup>3</sup> but on the other hand, in view of such events as Ovid's exile, it seems a mistake to deny all relationship between life and art.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps a reasonable compromise can be achieved by pointing out some of the major actions of Augustus and his



followers which seem likely to have affected the elegists' handling of the aristocratic ideal and the theme of moral decline.

One of the major points to consider is that Augustus had come to power through a civil war and had instigated something closely resembling a reign of terror in the forties. The memory of the atrocities committed under his command at this time must still have been fresh when Tibullus and Propertius began to publish.<sup>5</sup> Moreover Propertius had suffered in the confiscations following the battle of Philippi in 42 B.C. (Prop. 4.1.129-130) and had lost a relative in the aftermath of the siege of Perusia in 41 B.C. (Prop. 1.22.7-8), a fact which may well have influenced his attitudes not only to Augustus but also to civil war and to war in general. Tibullus may also have been a victim of the confiscations of the forties.<sup>6</sup> Certainly it is worth remembering that both poets had witnessed the atrocities consequent upon the clash of men ruthlessly pursuing the aristocratic ideal of pre-eminence in politics and warfare.<sup>7</sup> It would be odd if their response to this found no place in their works. Indeed Paul Jal attributes much of their horror of war to their reaction to the civil strife of the forties.<sup>8</sup>

Another significant factor in the social background is the moral revival attempted by Augustus. Amongst other things, Augustus sought to curb the decline in sexual morality, to encourage involvement in the public career

and to induce bachelors to marry and have families. This seems to have provoked considerable opposition amongst the elegists and at least one rebellious poem was sparked off by Augustus's moral legislation (Propertius 2.7).<sup>9</sup>

There is also the Augustan regime's important policy of literary patronage to consider. Patronage of writers was a long established custom in Rome and all three elegists seem to have been drawn into recognized literary circles. The two major patrons of the period were Messalla, with whom Tibullus and Ovid formed close associations, and Augustus's right-hand man, Maecenas, into whose ambit Propertius was drawn some time after 26 B.C. The advantages of such patronage did not lie only in financial rewards. As Sullivan acutely points out :

"Friendship with the great, in a society which depended so much upon personal alliances and political protection, was in itself no small reward."<sup>10</sup>

However membership in such a circle was also likely to involve pressure or persuasion to write on certain themes. The demands of Messalla do not seem to have been very exacting. Tibullus wrote a few poems in his honour, but Ovid never mentions him in his elegies, although Messalla seems to have encouraged their composition (E.P. 1.7.27-28).<sup>11</sup> By contrast the patronage of Maecenas probably carried with it more vigorous inducements to write on patriotic themes, particularly those concerning Augustus.

Certainly Propertius's movement towards more elegies on national themes in Books 3 and 4 has often been attributed at least partly to the influence of Maecenas's circle.<sup>12</sup> Although some critics see these elegies as predominantly ironical in tone,<sup>13</sup> the mere fact that they were written at all is significant. It suggests that Propertius had been given an official nudge in the direction, traditionally followed by Roman poets, of celebrating the military exploits of the aristocracy. Whatever irony Propertius may have injected into his treatment of this, the Augustan regime certainly seems to have influenced his choice of subject matter.

It might be argued that Augustus's ostentatious commitment to "pax" and "rura"<sup>14</sup> were also influential, in view of the important place these topics hold in elegy, particularly the work of Tibullus. However it seems safe to acquit the elegists of writing on these subjects out of a desire to please Augustus, since Tibullus in his most impassioned peace poem, 1.10, says nothing of Augustus and his policies, and Propertius consistently associates Augustus not with peace, but with war (2.1.25, 2.7.5, 2.34.62, 3.4, 3.5, 3.11, 4.6, etc.). Therefore it seems unwise to trace the themes of "pax" and "rura" in elegy to Augustus's policy on these matters.

Finally one should not forget the possibility of censorship under the Augustan regime. Certainly Livy and Pollio escaped censure for their freely expressed

republicanism, but Seneca tells us that the less important republican supporter T. Labienus committed suicide after his works were burnt on Augustus's orders.<sup>15</sup> It is evident therefore that discretion was required in the choice of subject matter and treatment. For anyone reluctant to write about Augustus this meant that a certain danger was involved in writing on public themes, which may have been a factor directing the elegists away from the choice of prose and towards the choice of poetry. Even here they were not entirely safe. Ovid's fate is a dismal reminder of the realities of Augustan censorship.<sup>16</sup> This atmosphere of prohibition may have had its effect on the elegists' handling of moral issues, although it would be difficult to pinpoint this.

In short, the influence of the Augustan regime on love elegy probably took the following forms. As the major representative of the aristocracy and its moral ideal, Augustus provided the elegists with material for praise, protest and humour. It is likely that the bloodshed associated with the early part of his reign gave added impetus to the elegists' diatribes against war. And, through the channels of patronage and censorship, he may have influenced the choice of subject matter and style in their works. All in all, the influence of his regime on love elegy is complex and difficult to assess precisely.

The literary climate of the times is full of

vitality. This was an intensely creative period in which there flourished two major schools of literary thought. The first was the conservative tradition descended from Ennius, whose adherents, in Sullivan's words, "looked for public-spirited poetry on a grand Roman scale."<sup>17</sup> The second was the literary school begun by the Neoteric writers of the late Republic, which looked to Alexandria for its inspiration.<sup>18</sup> In place of the patriotic subject matter and lofty style of the older poetic tradition, this school preferred slighter subjects and the "slender style".<sup>19</sup> Some of the most eminent writers of the Augustan period followed the conservative tradition. Livy, although writing prose not poetry, adhered to its principles. So, to a very great extent, did Horace. And Vergil, after an Alexandrian beginning, went on to write a patriotic epic in the grand manner. Ultimately both literary schools had an important impact on the elegists' handling of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline. The influence of the Alexandrian movement can be readily detected in the lightness of the elegists' approach to these subjects and their general avoidance of the grandiose style in handling them. However the conservative tradition also plays a part, although largely a negative one, in the elegists' treatment of these themes. The moral earnestness and the didactic sermons typical of the conservative tradition often re-appear in elegy, with only slight distortion, as amusing parody. Ovid is the chief exponent of this type of humour, but Tibullus is a close second.<sup>20</sup>

The question of the influence of the genre on the elegists' treatment of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline is also important. In order to understand this influence it is necessary to go back a step further and glance briefly at the origins of the genre. A. A. Day emphasizes the complexity of these in his classic work on the subject. As he points out :

"The sources contributing to Latin elegy are many and varied and its writers are distinguished by the widely eclectic nature of their knowledge of Greek literature and by their original employment of stock material common to all writers. Thus it has been found that in the developed elegiacs of the early Principate, there exists, sometimes within the limits of a single poem, clear evidence of the influence of Hellenistic epigram, of the pastoral of new comedy, of the learned elegy of the Alexandrians and, not least, of life itself".<sup>21</sup>

To these sources should probably also be added Roman rhetoric, satire and neoteric poetry. All these have some influence on the elegists' handling of moral themes.

The influence of Hellenistic epigram appears to some extent in the subject matter of elegy, but even more obviously in its style. Although most of the material borrowed by the elegists has no bearing on their treatment

of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline, some of it is relevant. For instance the chief symptoms of moral decline, according to the elegists, are feminine greed and venality in love, which they attribute mainly to the influence of foreign luxury. Parallels to these sentiments can be found in Hellenistic epigram. Thus Day points out that Tibullus's outcry against the greed and corruption of women in 2.4.29-36 has its counterpart in an epigram by Antipater of Thessalonica (Greek Anthology, 5.30).<sup>21</sup> Similarly, another epigram of Antipater (Greek Anthology, 5.31) seems to be echoed in Ovid's comments on the corruption of his own age in Am. 3.3.29 and A.A. 2.277-278.

However the most important influence of epigram lies in the formal, not the thematic, elements of the genre of elegy. Thus Propertius's elegy on the death of Paetus (3.7) bears some stylistic resemblance to the sepulchral epigrams of Book 7 of the Greek Anthology, but the moralizing elements in it do not seem to derive from epigram. Similarly, the Cornelia elegy (4.11) is written in the epigrammatic manner and bears a close resemblance to inscriptional epitaphs. This elegy is very important for an understanding of Propertius's handling of moral themes, but once again the influence of epigram lies in the form rather than the content of the elegy. Formal elements borrowed from epigram also appear in at least one of Ovid's elegies in which the aristocratic ideal and moral themes play an important part. This is Amores 2.6,

the elegy on the death of Corinna's parrot, which probably owes some of its details to Hellenistic funeral epigrams.

By contrast the influence of pastoral and new comedy lies in content, more than in style. The pastoral conventions of the bucolic landscape and the poet as a simple peasant singer are particularly important in the work of Tibullus, where they play a major role in his presentation of the ideal society. Tibullus uses pastoral themes to show the tension between the real world and the ideal world and to express his horror of war and his love of rural serenity. In Propertius's work pastoral themes are used in the introduction to some of his "aetia" (4.4 and 4.9) and also "to make more biting his denunciation of modern avarice in contrast with the old wholesome simplicity"<sup>22</sup> (3.13.27). In Ovid's work pastoral material, like so much else, is used for burlesque. Transformed, but still recognizable, pastoral elements lurk in his account of the rape of the Sabines (A.A. 1.101-132), in his advice on rustic gifts (A.A. 2.263-266) and in his counsel on escaping unhappy love (R.A. 169ff). In all these passages undertones of mockery towards the aristocratic ideal or the traditional view of moral decline are clearly apparent. This mockery is sharpened by Ovid's inapposite use of pastoral imagery.

The major influence of new comedy on elegy is to be found in characterization and "plot", if this term may be applied to a number of discrete poems. The standard young



lover of elegy has close affinities with the "adulescens" of comedy, while the elegiac characters of the greedy girl, the bawd and the rich rival have their counterparts in the "meretrix", the "lena" and the "dives amator" of the stage.<sup>23</sup> Fragments of comic plots often seem to arise in love elegy particularly in the young lover's complaints about his rival. Many of the moral issues of elegy arise from the interaction of stock comic characters and the elegists' treatment of private morality shows a heavy debt to comedy. This is particularly evident in some of the elegists' diatribes against moral decline, which often focus on the corrupting influences of foreign wealth and unprincipled bawds and the vices of feminine greed and venality in love (e.g. Tib. 2.4.27ff., Prop. 4.5.21ff.), all of which are familiar comic themes.

The nature of the influence of Alexandrian elegy has been the subject of considerable critical debate. In 1905 Jacoby convincingly demolished the prevailing critical theory that Latin love elegy was directly derived from a vanished Hellenistic subjective love elegy to which it was formally similar and since then critics have proceeded with caution in assessing the influence of Alexandrian elegy.<sup>24</sup> However, at the risk of glib over-simplification, it can perhaps be said that it lay in form and style more than in content. The elegists' adherence to the Alexandrian principles of the neoteric school has already been mentioned<sup>25</sup> and it seems likely that this took the form of avoiding the grandiose in subject matter and style and

showing a preference for a lighter poetic touch than was usual in Latin poetry. Thus Alexandrian conventions may well be reflected in the elegists' teasing approach to the aristocratic ideal, in their oblique and unusual approach to myth (apparent in both Propertius and Ovid) and in their evident dislike of pompous moral didacticism. One important stylistic device was probably suggested to them by the neoteric poetry of Catullus and Gallus<sup>26</sup> and this is the autobiographical mode of elegy. This is of major importance in the appreciation of virtually any aspect of the elegists' poetry, but especially so where their treatment of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline is concerned. A very great part of the humour, vigour and immediacy of the elegists' repudiation of the aristocratic ideal and their embracing of the traditional symptoms of moral decline derives from their use of this autobiographical fiction.<sup>27</sup> Its impact is further strengthened by elements imported into elegy from real life - such as the details of Messalla's triumph of 27 B.C. in Tibullus 1.7, the topical references to Augustus's moral legislation in Propertius 2.7, and the vivid Roman setting of Ovid's Ars amatoria. Like the autobiographical mode, these realistic elements lend great vitality to the elegists' handling of the aristocratic ideal and moral issues.

Two other literary influences which have some influence on the form of elegy are satire and rhetoric. The elegists often followed the satirists in casting their poems in the form of a talk or conversation addressed to

an assumed listener. This lends a suitably intimate tone to the elegists' confessions of their own "nequitia" and puts the reader or listener in the position of a confidant, or even a conspirator against traditional moral values. Thus in Propertius 1.1.25 the audience are drawn into the drama of Propertius's suffering through his address to "vos ... amici" and are cast in the role of sympathetic friends. In the same way, Tibullus and Ovid often seem to assume that they are talking to abandoned lovers like themselves, who share their own moral values or lack of them (e.g. Tib. 1.5.75, 2.3.33-44; Ovid M.F. 17ff., A.A. passim). This has the effect of inviting the reader to share the witty, amoral cosmopolitan outlook of the elegists and to join in their subversion of traditional values. No doubt some of their audience were delighted to do so, but it seems highly probable that this ploy was also intended to provoke moral outrage in more conservative listeners. Thus the conversational style of satire has an important influence on the elegists' handling of moral issues.

The form and, to some extent, the themes of rhetoric also had an influence on elegy. This influence is slight in the case of Tibullus, but it is strongly apparent in the works of both Propertius and Ovid. Propertius uses the conventions of rhetoric to lend greater dignity to some of his characters and to enhance their aura of moral worth. Thus Arethusa is portrayed as a moral paragon in poem 4.3, an elegy which has many elements in common with the

rhetorical exercise of characterization. Similarly the Cornelia elegy (4.11), with its portrait of a virtuous Roman matron, owes much to the traditional funeral eulogy.<sup>28</sup> However, as Day points out, there had probably long been a close connection between rhetoric and comedy,<sup>29</sup> and Ovid uses rhetorical touches chiefly for comic effect. This is particularly apparent in the Ars amatoria, in which rhetorical conventions adorn more than one brilliant skit on traditional morality (e.g. A.A. 1.459ff., 2.43703, 3.531-532). The formal influence of rhetoric thus affects both the serious and humorous treatment of moral issues in love elegy.

It would, of course, be a mistake to suppose that the conventions of love elegy were entirely rigid. It was not a long established genre of Latin literature and consequently it offered ample scope for experiment. Catullus had written a few poems in elegiac metre and Gallus (whose work has unfortunately perished)<sup>30</sup> had also composed elegies, but there is no reason to suppose that the Augustan elegists felt obliged to imitate their subjects and style. To a very great extent Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid were engaged in setting up their own literary canons, reading widely and borrowing what suited them. Nevertheless it does seem fair to say that the genre of love elegy (even if the elegists themselves were its major architects) made some recognizable contributions to their handling of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline. Chief among these are the formal elements of style - the epigrammatic manner, the avoidance of the grandiose, the autobiographical mode,

the intimate, conversational form of address, varied by the high-flown language of rhetoric - and some of the subjects of elegy, particularly the pastoral themes and the moral issues arising from the conflict of comic characters.

Bearing in mind the general similarities imposed by their use of a common genre, it should now be possible to evaluate the love elegists' treatment of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline in relation to their individual literary intentions. The variety of literary functions which these subjects have in elegy should then become clear.

Any argument about Tibullus's literary intentions must be largely an argument from silence.<sup>31</sup> Apart from his conventional claim in 2.4.13-20 that his only purpose in writing poetry is to gain access to his mistress (a claim which can hardly be taken at its face value), he says virtually nothing about his literary intentions. However some insight into the nature of these can perhaps be gained by examining his rare comments on his own poetry. These comments suggest that his poetic themes fall into three main categories - love, rural life and the praise of individuals.

The main statements about his love poetry come in poems 1.4, 1.9, 2.4 (the example already mentioned) and 2.5. In the first of these, the garden god Priapus

complains about contemporary corruption (1.4.57-60) and then goes on to extol the part of poetry in conferring fame (1.4.61-66) :

"Pieridas, pueri, doctos et amate poetas,  
aurea nec superent munera Pieridas.  
carmine purpurea est Nisi coma; carmina ni sint,  
ex unero Pelopis non nituisset ebur.  
quem referent Musae, vivet, dum robora tellus,  
dum caelum stellas, dum vehet annis aquas."

It should be noted that this statement applies to poetry in general (not to Tibullus's poetry in particular), that it is spoken by the disreputable Priapus (not by Tibullus himself) and that its real purpose (in spite of its high flown language) is to make boys surrender to homosexuals without demanding a fee. At first glance, therefore, it does not seem to provide much real illumination about Tibullus's own literary intentions. However it is important to view the passage in the context of the whole poem. Later in the same elegy Tibullus relates this advice of Priapus to his own ostensible literary purposes (1.4.73-74) :

"haec mihi, quae canerem Titio, deus edidit ore :  
sed Titium coniunx haec meminisse vetat."

Foiled by Titius's lack of response, Tibullus then offers his precepts to other lovers (75-76) and confides his ambition to be a "magister amoris" (77-80), but is finally forced to admit that his teaching is useless (81-82) :

"parce, puer, quaeso, ne turpis fabula fiam  
cum mea ridebunt vana magisteria."

There is considerable tension here between the lofty role of the poet envisaged in 1.63-66 and the demeaning reality of Tibullus's attempts to exploit the power of song in 1.73ff. His avowed literary intention is to instruct and win over young men through his poetry. His real literary intention is clearly to unmask himself as a credulous, incompetent fool, as pompous, garrulous and morally suspect as his teacher Priapus. As part of this unflattering characterization of both god and poet, Tibullus uses a traditionally worded attack on moral decline (1.57-60). Put in the mouth of such a disreputable character as Priapus, this appears totally absurd. It also serves to underline the hypocrisy and humbug of Priapus himself and to prepare the way for the comic deflation of Tibullus's own pretensions at the end of the elegy. Two conclusions emerge from this poem - firstly that Tibullus's avowed literary intentions are not necessarily the same as his real literary intentions and secondly that he uses the theme of moral decline as a tool for characterization and humour.

Similar factors are at work in poem 1.9, where Tibullus comments on his poetic preoccupations (1.9.47.):

"quin etiam attonita laudes tibi mente canebam."

One might suppose that this reflected a straightforward

intention (now vanished) to praise Marathus and celebrate the joys of love. However we discover that Tibullus has been gullible once again ("stulte confisus amori", 44) and that he regrets his verses (46ff.). Obviously, therefore, his past dedication to praising Marathus has been mentioned only in order to heighten the image of his present disillusionment. It seems clear that he never really intended to capture the pleasures of love, but only to show its disappointments. He mentions his past literary endeavours (which probably never existed in reality) only as an aid to characterizing himself as credulous and self deluding. Once again traditional moral sentiments play an important part in this humorous characterization in the form of Tibullus's pompous denunciation of the corrupting effects of wealth (1.9.20ff.).

Tibullus's claim that he writes poetry only to gain access to his mistress also deserves some attention. After complaining about his enslavement to Nemesis, he exclaims dramatically (2.4.13-20) :

"nec prosunt elegi nec carminis auctor Apollo;  
 illa cava pretium flagitat usque manu,  
 ite procul, Musae, si non prodestis amanti;  
 non ego vos, ut sint bella canenda, colo,  
 nec refero Solisque vias et qualis, ubi orbem  
 complevit, versis Luna recurrit equis.  
 ad dominam faciles aditus per carmina quaero;  
 ite procul, Musae, si nihil ista valent."

He follows this up with a picture of threatened sacrilege,



a diatribe on moral decline, then warnings, pleas and final capitulation to Nemesis.

Although his comments on his literary intentions cannot be taken at their face value, they are still very significant. What Tibullus is doing here is to denigrate literature and not only in the form of elegy. The themes of "bella", "Solisque vias" and "Luna" are also contemptuously pushed aside. The real purpose of this total rejection is fairly subtle. A close look at the structure of the poem reveals that the outburst against literature is only one in a series of outbursts, involving, in rapid succession, a farewell to liberty (1ff.), literature (13ff.) and lofty moral principle (21ff.). Everything is overthrown in the interests of love, and Tibullus ends up as a slave to Nemesis. Tibullus's aim in all this is clearly to show the anarchic nature of passionate love and also the absurdity of young men who want to place it before all other values, activities and institutions - home, household gods, liberty, literature and piety. Tibullus's comments on literature thus serve (like his other outbursts) to bolster his characterization of himself as an impetuous, unscrupulous young madman. The outburst on moral decline also plays an important part in characterization, since it adds hypocrisy to Tibullus's other qualities. There is something deliciously ironical in the delivery of a complaint about moral decline from one who has already demonstrated so convincingly his own indifference to morality.

The remainder of the passages in which Tibullus talks about his literary intentions are far more straightforward. Thus in poem 2.1 he sums up one of his most important literary themes in the brief statement "rura cano rurisque deos" (2.1.37). This statement does not seem to contain any hidden meaning, since it occurs early in a poem genuinely devoted to praise of rural life. And in poem 2.5 Tibullus seems to contemplate a fairly simple transition from love themes to encomia (2.5.111-118) :

"usque cano Nemesim, sine qua versus mihi nullus  
 verba potest iustos aut reperire pedes.  
 at tu, nam divum servat tutela poetas,  
 praemoneo, vati parce, puella, sacro,  
 ut Messalinum celebrem, cum praemia belli  
 ante suos currus oppida victa feret,  
 ipse gerens laurus; lauro devinctus agresti  
 miles "io" magna voce "trumphe" canet."

In general Tibullus's handling of the themes of rural life and the praise of Messalla and his family seems to be more direct than his treatment of love. In these cases, therefore, his statements about his literary intentions can safely be taken at their face value.

It is evident from all this that Tibullus's statements about his own poetry have to be treated with caution. Sometimes he can be trusted, but at other times he seems to make deliberately misleading comments about his poetry for purposes of humour and characterization. Nevertheless it

seems clear that his real literary intentions are to capture the disillusionment and comedy of love affairs, to celebrate the joys of country life and to praise his patron Messalla. In order to achieve these ends, he makes significant use of the subjects of moral decline and the aristocratic ideal.

Tibullus's use of these subjects in describing his love affairs is very skilful. It is noteworthy that Tibullus is consistently doomed to disappointment in love. He never presents himself as truly happy and fulfilled in his love affairs. He is constantly fantasizing about some ideal, bucolic world of love (1.1.41ff. 1.2.71-75, 1.5.21ff.), remembering the past (1.3.9ff.), dreaming about the future (1.3.89ff.) or complaining about his unhappiness (1.5, 2.4), others' infidelity (1.6, 1.9, 2.3) and the obstacles to his satisfaction (1.2, 1.5, 2.6). His evocation of this disillusionment in love often centres on the conflict between his own ideal, rustic world of love and peace, and the claims of the real world of war and violence, the world of the aristocratic ideal. Again and again the claims of the real world seem destined to win, while Tibullus's dreams of happiness are doomed to evaporate (e.g. 1.1.25ff., 1.2.65ff., 1.3, 1.10.11ff.). The threats to his happiness generally come from the demands placed on him to serve in the army or from the pernicious effects of the plunder, won in war, which a rival is using to entice away his girl. The aristocratic ideal of the military career thus comes to symbolize the forces intent on parting Tibullus from love. Consequently his attitude to it in

these poems is usually one of despairing opposition.

In handling the comic side of love, Tibullus makes quite extensive use of the theme of moral decline, but he transforms the traditional version of it significantly. The diatribes against moral decline in his poetry are generally delivered by thoroughly disreputable characters in totally absurd contexts (e.g. 1.4.57ff., 2.3.35ff.). As a result, they have a humorous effect and enhance Tibullus's comic characterization of his personae.

Tibullus's treatment of country life overlaps with his treatment of fantasized happiness in love. The countryside usually provides the setting for his idylls of bliss in love, but it also appears in more robust passages in his poetry. We may doubt that Delia or Memesis will ever grace Tibullus's farm, but we do not doubt the existence of that farm, even if Tibullus does omit the harsher details of rural life in his references to it. It is precisely this slight idealization of rustic things that is the most interesting feature of Tibullus's treatment of country life. In his poetry, country existence becomes the symbol of peace, safety and happiness and it is constantly set in opposition to the brutality of the outside world. Tibullus rejects the aristocratic concept of the ideal society as an austere, rustic community, marked by its prowess in war. In its place he creates an ideal world which is a rural oasis of peace and tranquillity, where war has no place. He rejects the notion of the soldier as an object of veneration and

sets up in his place the harmless, obscure peasant farmer. He identifies greed for plunder as the primary motive for war and, as a corollary to all this, he denounces warfare and its consequences as the worst symptoms of moral decline. Clearly this involves an extensive transformation of the traditional view of moral decline sanctioned by the aristocracy. "Pax" and "rura" are acknowledged to be two of Tibullus's main poetic themes<sup>32</sup> and this transformation of the concept of moral decline plays a vital part in his treatment of both. It must therefore be considered to be of major importance in any assessment of his poetry.

The only really puzzling feature in Tibullus's handling of the aristocratic ideal and the theme of moral decline is his treatment of Messalla. It is difficult to blink the inconsistency between his diatribes against the wickedness of war and his generous praise of Messalla's military exploits. The only tentative explanation which occurs is that the poems which are dedicated primarily to the praise of Messalla and his son (1.7 and 2.5) have their origin in a different genre from the remainder of Tibullus's elegies.<sup>33</sup> It can thus be argued that the conventions of the encomium combine with personal affection to produce a more respectful treatment of the aristocratic ideal than is usual in his other poems. This still does not explain the changes of tone in poem 1.1, but the anomalies which remain serve as a useful warning against too simplistic an interpretation of Tibullus's work. Respect and ambivalence mingle with hostility to the

aristocratic ideal in his poetry.

In summary it may be said that either the aristocratic ideal or the theme of moral decline plays an important part in almost every poem written by Tibullus. These two subjects have a wide range of literary functions in his work, serving as vehicles for humour, characterization, protest against war and praise of individuals. The diversity and extent of their functions in different poems can be explained largely by the varying nature of Tibullus's literary intentions.

Propertius is more vocal about his literary intentions than Tibullus. In the early books he makes a number of conventional statements about the aims of his poetry. Thus in poem 1.7 he claims that he wants his poetry to please Cynthia (1.7.11), to be read with profit by neglected lovers (1.7.13-14) and to bring him glory. Similar aims appear in 2.8.11, where poems appear on a level with gifts, as tributes intended to win a girl's favour and in 2.13, where Propertius suggests that his main aim in writing is to impress Cynthia (2.13.7). The same type of intention is apparent in the *paraclausithyron* (1.16), where Propertius implies that the aim of his songs is to win access to his mistress (1.16.41ff.). The didactic purpose of his love poetry, which is glimpsed for a moment in 1.7.13-14, reappears in poem 1.10, where Propertius pictures himself as a "magister amoris", giving comfort, help and advice through his words (1.10.18). There are also several references to

his poetry's power to confer fame (2.5.6, 2.34.93) or notoriety (2.5.27-30) on Propertius himself or on others. All of these poetic intentions are fairly straightforward and have no really dramatic influence on his handling of moral decline and the aristocratic ideal, apart from their obvious effect of steering him away from public themes to the private themes of love.

However from Book 2 onwards a change becomes apparent in Propertius's statements about his literary intentions. It seems that he is beginning to toy with the notion of attempting national poetry and he portrays this conflict about his literary intentions in a number of poems. Significantly almost everyone of these ends up as a "recusatio". The basic theme of the "recusatio" in Augustan poetry is the poet's unworthiness or unwillingness to celebrate the exploits of Augustus. Williams interprets this as an oblique method of praising Augustus, arguing that :

"It is clear ... that they (i.e. the Augustan poets) are using this form of poem to enumerate and praise the great deeds of Augustus, under the guise of proposing their own inability".<sup>34</sup>

While this may be true of Horace's work, it is hard to see how it applies to the treatment of the "recusatio" by Propertius.

All of Propertius's poems of this sort end up in

what seems deliberate anti-climax. In poem 2.1 the subject of Augustus is barely squeezed in between two long passages on love and even the apparent praise of Augustus seems to conceal some calculated insults. Thus, although Propertius professes his readiness to write whole Iliads ("longas ... Iliadas", 14) on the subject of the naked Cynthia, he languidly regrets his inability to do the same for Augustus (2.1.41-42) :

"nec mea conveniunt duro praecordia versu

Caesaris in Phrygios condere nomen avos".

Moreover his references to Mutina and Philippi contain some bitter reminders of the Roman blood shed there ("civilia busta", 27) and his refusal to treat anything more serious than lovers' battles (45-46) is followed by some thoughts on "laus" which are a far cry from the notions sanctioned by Augustus and the aristocracy (47-48). Far from using the "recusatio" to praise Augustus, it seems to me that Propertius is using it to undermine him, along with the aristocratic ideal which he represented. The subject of the aristocratic ideal thus serves in this poem as a vehicle for irony and question.

Much the same is true of Propertius's other "recusationes". Thus in poem 2.10 his impressive preamble to a song in praise of Augustus quickly fades away, while in 3.9 he effectively turns the tables on Maecenas, who has been trying to persuade him to write about Augustus, by pointing out politely that he is modestly hanging back



from entering Augustan epic in the same way as Maecenas hangs back from entering Augustan politics. He adds that if Maecenas will lead the way, he will follow. Although he makes some attempt to be placatory in this poem (especially in his statement in 3.9.19 :

"hic satus ad pacem, hic castrensibus utilis armis"),

Propertius still conveys his own lack of enthusiasm for the aristocratic ideal. It is perhaps significant that in the following poem he reverts enthusiastically to the subject of love. Elsewhere Propertius invents literary advisors to drag him back to love poetry whenever he seems in imminent danger of plunging into national themes. Thus in poem 3.3 the god Apollo recalls him from the celebration of Roman heroes to the slighter themes of love and in poem 4.1 the astrologer Horus performs a similar service. The impression left by these poems is that Propertius's protestations of longing to praise the exploits of Roman heroes are very unconvincing. It is doubtful whether they are even meant to convince. A glance at the context of poem 3.3 shows that it is surrounded by a poem rejecting the themes of war (3.1), another poem extolling the themes of love (3.2), a third poem containing barely concealed derision of Augustus's campaigns (3.4) and a poem in praise of peace (3.5). When this fact is added to the internal content of the poem (with its absurdly pompous prohibitions on martial themes), it seems likely that Propertius is using his announcement of patriotic literary intentions to have fun at the expense of the aristocratic ideal and its eulogists. The same suspicion arises about poem 4.1.

Propertius's usual justification for eschewing patriotic themes for those of love is his profound commitment to the literary principles of Callimachus (2.34, 3.1, 3.9). Whatever else this entails, it undoubtedly involves an avoidance of the grandiose in subject matter and style.<sup>35</sup>

In poem 2.34 Propertius offers advice to his friend Lynceus, who has finally surrendered to love. In the course of this advice he gives some revealing insights into his own poetic intentions. He tells Lynceus that ancient poets who wrote philosophy, epic and tragedy are of no use to the lover and urges him instead to imitate Philetus and Callimachus (31-32) and shape his verse "on a narrow lathe" (43). He cites the popularity which his own love poetry has brought him as proof of the soundness of his counsel (55ff.) and reiterates the value of playful themes (67ff., esp. 85). He concludes with a prayer for undying fame (94). This poem revives the poetic aims which Propertius had expressed earlier - to please a girl, to win favour and to obtain glory. However it also hints at the important elegiac convention of choosing suitable themes. It is noteworthy that Propertius rejects lofty subjects and pronounces in favour of playful themes. In poem 3.1 his Callimachean principles are once again associated with slender themes. This time the subject of war is explicitly rejected (7) and Propertius expresses a wish for his poetry to be read in peace (17-18). In 3.9.43-46 he expresses his desire to follow Callimachus in writing poetry that will please and amuse young people in love. It thus seems likely that Propertius's adherence to the principles of Callimachus involves the choice of a delicate literary

style and themes associated with amusement, love and peace. This has important implications for his treatment of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline. It may therefore be instructive at this point to examine the literary functions of these two subjects in his work.

With few exceptions, Propertius's poetry can be divided into three broad categories - his love poetry, his Roman "aetia" and his poems about Augustus. The subjects of moral decline and the aristocratic ideal have little significance in the "aetia", but in the two remaining groups of elegies they play a very important role.

In his love poetry Propertius, like Tibullus, wants to capture the comedy and the frustrations attendant upon a love affair. Unlike Tibullus, he also wants to show happiness in love. In pursuing all these ends he makes significant use of the subjects of both moral decline and the aristocratic ideal, employing them for purposes of humour, characterization, and biting social commentary. Thus in 4.5.21ff Propertius re-casts an account of the traditional symptoms of moral decline into the form of a didactic lecture as part of his humorous characterization of the bawd. A similar use of commentary on the traditional symptoms of moral decline as a technique of humorous characterization occurs in poem 2.16. However it is noteworthy that Propertius's humour is far more sardonic than that of Tibullus or Ovid and in both these poems his humour seems to exist side by side with genuine moral outrage at the

corruption of his own times. In 4.5 the bawd's speech, apart from its value in characterization, serves as a startling reminder of that corruption.

In general Propertius shows a far more earnest moral outlook than either Tibullus or Ovid and, although some of his outbursts against the corrupting influences of his own age seem to be motivated primarily by self-interest (e.g. 1.2, 1.11, 2.19), some of his diatribes on moral decline are undoubtedly seriously intended (e.g. 1.16, 2.6, 2.5.35-38, 2.32, 3.13). His purpose in these poems is evidently to express genuine concern and sorrow over the moral state of contemporary Rome and even to deliver a warning to its citizens (3.13). By introducing serious moral reflections into his poems on love, he also elevates the status of his love affair with Cynthia, giving it added dignity and importance. However it is important to remember that, although Propertius sometimes shares the serious moral outlook of the historians, he still significantly re-shapes the traditional version of moral decline by concentrating on private rather than public morality.

The subject of the aristocratic ideal also plays an important part in Propertius's poems on love, since he frequently polarizes the two things. Again and again the ethos of the lover, with its dedication to pleasure and peace, is set in opposition to the aristocratic ideal of service to the state with its devotion to war (e.g. 2.7.13ff., 2.15.41ff., 3.5.1ff.). Like Tibullus, Propertius

triumphantly vindicates the values of the lover (2.15.47-48) and condemns the ethos of the soldier as a menace to other people's happiness and very lives (3.12.1-6, 4.3.63ff., 2.15.44). As in Tibullus's poetry, this involves a dramatic reversal of many traditional moral notions. Like Tibullus, Propertius proclaims his allegiance to the qualities traditionally associated with moral decline ("nequitia", 1.6.25, "vitium", 2.22.17) and, in defiance of traditional attitudes, denounces the war-mongering of Rome's leading citizens as a blot on history (2.15.41-48). Thus the subject of the aristocratic ideal is forced to take on the unexpected function of acting as a vehicle for protest.

Not all the poems which contain references to Augustus have him as their central theme. On several occasions his name is mentioned only in passing or his actions (with or without explicit reference to his name) are discussed in a digression from the poem's central themes. Nevertheless these brief comments are sometimes very revealing. Thus poem 1.21 is primarily a haunting lament for a man killed after the siege of Ierusia. His ghost recounts his fate (1.21.7-8) :

"Gallum per medios ereptum Caesaris enses  
effugere ignotas non potuisse manus."

Yet, although we learn that Gallus was not directly a victim of Caesar's swords, their menace is vividly conveyed, as is Augustus's contribution to the bloodbath of Ierusia. Added pathos is generated by the hint of a love story

between Gallus and his comrade's sister. Augustus and the civil war thus appear as destroyers of private happiness. Similarly in the poem immediately following this (1.22), where Augustus's name is not even mentioned, the civil war (which he had precipitated) leaves a trail of graves across Tuscany. Bitterness against the aristocrats' struggle for pre-eminence underlies both these poems, although Augustus is barely mentioned in them. Apart from being moving expressions of private sorrow, the poems also function as implicit social commentaries on the civil war and the ethos of power and ambition which had caused it. The position of the poems at the end of the book reinforces their significance, since it lends them the air of a parting manifesto. Propertius, who had begun the book by announcing his allegiance to love, ends it by showing his opposition to war. Once again the aristocratic ideal is suggestively associated with social protest.

This use of the subject of the aristocratic ideal as material for protest is a very important feature of Propertius's work and is often associated with references to Augustus. Thus in poem 2.7 Propertius vigorously expresses his opposition not only to Augustus's moral legislation (2.7.1ff.), but also to the moral values which lay behind it, particularly the notion of rearing children for "arrow fodder"<sup>36</sup> in the Roman legions (2.7.13). Similarly, in a poem already mentioned (2.15), Propertius digresses from an exuberant account of a night with Cynthia to protest against the atrocities caused by the pursuit of the aristo-

cratic ideal (2.15.41ff.). Among these he cites the example of Actium, Augustus's most important victory. And in poem 3.5, speaking on behalf of lovers in general, he announces his commitment to peace (3.5.1ff.), points out the futility of the aristocratic ideal (15ff.) and contemptuously leaves the invasion of Parthia (popularly associated with Augustus) to others. The aristocratic ideal has much the same function as a subject for protest and social commentary in poems 3.12 and 4.3, where it appears as a menace to the private happiness and even the virtue (3.12.17-18) of loving married couples. Propertius presents service in Augustus's legions as an agent of unhappiness and family breakdown. Apart from the social commentary involved in this, Propertius's implicit criticisms of the aristocratic ideal also function as effective literary devices for heightening the tension, drama and pathos of these two poems.

Even in the poems where Propertius seems to be praising Augustus most lavishly (3.4, 3.11, 4.6), irony and ambiguity towards Augustus and the aristocratic ideal can often be detected.<sup>37</sup> Thus in poem 3.4 Propertius's apparent encouragement of Augustus's eastern expedition actually contains several allusive hints at Augustus's greed. Moreover his show of respectful enthusiasm swoops into anticlimax with Propertius's picture of himself reclining in his mistress's embrace to watch Augustus's triumphal procession (3.4.15). The paraphernalia of the aristocratic ideal thus become a subject for ironical humour. Similarly in 3.11, Propertius's apparent fervour in praising the

exploits of Augustus and other exponents of the aristocratic ideal is suddenly checked by a highly ambiguous comment (3.11.67-68), which seems to question the validity of that ideal. Even after the fulsome praise of Augustus's victory at Actium in poem 4.6, Propertius manages to make an ostentatious retreat to more peaceful themes (4.6.69ff.). While the aristocratic ideal may function on one level as a subject for praise, at another level it functions as a subject for irony and question in these poems.

In general the aristocratic ideal and the theme of moral decline have many of the same literary functions in Propertius's work as they have in Tibullus's. Thus the traditional concept of moral decline furnishes Propertius with material for humour and characterization, while the ethos of the aristocratic ideal with its high cost in human suffering becomes a subject for protest. However Propertius differs from Tibullus in that he occasionally shows earnest moral purpose and delivers at least one diatribe against moral decline which has a serious didactic intention (3.13). Nevertheless he resembles the other elegists in his significant re-casting of the traditional concepts and terminology of moral decline and the aristocratic ideal and in his repudiation of public life. Some of Propertius's most important elegies spring from his reflections on these themes.

Ovid's literary intentions are not difficult to under-



stand, since he gives lucid and systematic outlines of them. Thus in the Amores the opening and closing poems of each book are used for a discussion of his literary intentions (except in Book 2, where the penultimate elegy is used). In the Ars amatoria Ovid's avowed literary intentions must be treated with more caution, since most of his statements on the subject are deliberately misleading and are made only for humorous purposes. However his letters from exile contain numerous references to his real literary intentions in the Ars. Finally the Remedia Amoris contains a serious and thoughtful manifesto on his literary intentions as a love poet (371ff.).

With his farewell to military themes (Am. 1.1.1ff.), his humorous treatment of Cupid and his remarks on the importance of suiting subject matter to metre (19-20) in Amores 1.1, Ovid makes it clear that his primary purpose in the following poems will be to entertain. As a corollary to this, he makes it clear that he intends to pursue the light themes of love, not the serious themes of war. After pursuing these aims throughout the book, Ovid then brings it to a close with a more thoughtful examination of the poet's role in Amores 1.15. He defends himself against the charge of sloth and points out that "fama perennis" (7) can be won by poetry and that this is his aim. The elegy contains a serious and uplifting vision of the grandeur of Greek and Roman poets and of Ovid's ambition to be numbered among them.

In the following poem (Amores 2.1) Ovid returns to earth and playfully repeats his aim to be read by lovers (Am. 2.1.5ff.). In the course of this poem Ovid is once again compelled to give up serious themes (Am. 2.1.11ff.) and consoles himself with the thought that elegies are persuasive enough to open barred doors (Am. 2.1.21ff.) and to win the favours of women ("pretium carminis", 34). This poem thus reflects the conventional utilitarian aim of elegy. In Amores 2.18 Ovid shows himself, not too reluctantly, being summoned back from military themes to love by his mistress (Am. 2.18.11-12). However he also includes a slightly more serious comment on his efforts at writing tragedy (13-14), which met the same end.

This theme is picked up again in Amores 3.1, where Tragedy and Elegy meet in contest for his services. The comments uttered by the personified figure of Elegy are very revealing about Ovid's intentions within this genre. Thus Elegy comments (Am. 3.1.41-42) :

"sum levis, et mecum levis est, mea cura, Cupido;  
non sum materia fortior ipsa mea."

and goes on to describe elegy's power to open doors and its didactic function in teaching lovers (49ff.). Clearly Elegy's avowed persuasive and didactic intentions are mentioned, like Ovid's, primarily to amuse the reader. Later in the same book Ovid complains (still humorously) that his elegies have served to open Corinna's door to others (Am. 3.12.9-12) and, with almost prophetic gloom, goes on to query their usefulness to him (13ff.). In the same poem he

also delivers a warning to the reader against taking his elegies as realistic accounts of his life (41-44).

Finally in Amores 3.15 he bids farewell to elegy and claims that he has won glory from it (Am. 3.15.8), as he had aimed.

It is evident from all this that Ovid's literary aims in the Amores are not to produce realistic autobiography, but to entertain his audience and to win fame through light-hearted, witty fiction. As part of his purpose to amuse, he also lays claim to a didactic intention as a "magister amoris" and suggests that he writes poetry to win his mistress's favour and open her doors. However these latter claims need not be taken very seriously.

In the Ars amatoria Ovid makes some similar claims about his didactic literary intentions (A.A. 1.1-40, 2.1-20, 3.1ff.), which are equally clearly not to be taken at face value. He also hints that poetry is a useful aid to seduction (A.A. 3.329ff.) and repeats the conventional notion that its aim is to bring fame to its subject and glory to the poet (A.A. 3.400ff., esp. 403). However Ovid's real intentions in the Ars amatoria can best be judged from his statements about them in the letters from exile.

In the Tristia Ovid lays heavy emphasis on the fictitious nature of his love poems and their humorous purpose. Thus in T. 1.9.59ff., in a letter to a friend, he insists that the love elegies were written out of youthful

exuberance and were not to be taken as accurate reports of his actions :

"vita tamen tibi nota mea est. scis artibus illis  
auctoris mores abstinuisse sui:  
scis vetus hoc iuveni lusum mihi carmen et istos,  
ut non laudandos, sic tamen esse iocos."

Ovid frequently repeats this assertion that the love elegies were mere games of his youth. In T. 3.1.7, he refers to the Ars amatoria as :

"id ... quod viridi quondam male lusit in aevo."

He uses the same verb in T. 3.2.5-6 :

"nec mihi, quod lusi vero sine crimine prodest,  
quoque magis vita Musa iocata mea est."

And he twice refers to himself as "tenerorum lusor amorum" (T. 3.3.73, T. 4.10.1), even asking that the epithet be engraved on his tomb. In T. 5.1.43-44 he says :

"nec tamen ut lusit, rursus mea littera ludet:  
sit semel illa loco luxuriata meo."

Similarly, in Tristia Book 2, the kernel of Ovid's defence of the Ars amatoria is his assertion that his love elegies were merely youthful amusements, not to be taken seriously. He stresses this point repeatedly, referring to his love elegies as "lusibus ... ineptis" (T. 2.223), "nostros ... iocos" (T. 2.233) and "delicias ... meas" (T. 2.78). In T. 2.345 he mentions the "lascivia" which prompted him to write the Ars Amatoria and in T. 2.117 he comments regretfully that his "ingenium" had been employed

"nimium iuvenaliter." He sums up his defence in T. 2.353-

6 :

"crede mihi distant mores a carmine nostro -  
 vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea -  
 magnaue pars mendax operum est et ficta meorum:  
 plus sibi permisit compositore suo."

As well as emphasizing the playful nature of his love elegies and their lack of connection with his life, Ovid makes two other important points in Tristia Book Two. In the first place he claims that in using a didactic form for his erotic verse he was merely employing a well-established genre which had already been used for other entertaining subjects (T. 2.491-494) :

"taliam luduntur fumoso mense Decembri  
 quae damno nulli composuisse fuit.  
 his ego deceptus non tristia carmina feci,  
 sed tristis nostros poena secuta iocos."

Secondly he makes it clear that he was bored with the traditional themes of Latin writing. Commenting on his choice of subject matter in the elegies, he says (T. 2.313-318) :

"at cur in nostra nimia est lascivia Musa  
 curve meus cuiquam suadet amare liber?  
 nil nisi peccatum manifestaque culpa fatenda est:  
 paenitet ingenii iudiciiue mei.  
 cur non Argolicis potius quae concidit armis  
 vexata est iterum carmine Troia meo?"

His distaste for many of the hackneyed themes popular among

writers of his time is apparent from his use of the word "vexata".

We may safely conclude from all this that Ovid's real literary aims in the Ars amatoria are fundamentally the same as in the Amores - to show originality of style, to entertain his readers and to stick to the light-hearted themes which he considered suitable for elegy. Much the same intentions can be discerned in the Remedia Amoris, but in this poem Ovid for once discards his comic mask and gives a serious exposition of his principles about the choice of literary subject matter (R.A. 371-385) :

"at tu, quicumque es, quem nostra licentia laedit,  
       si sapis, ad numeros exige quidque suos.  
 fortia Maeonio gaudent pede bella referri;  
       deliciis illic quis locus esse potest?  
 grande sonant tragici; tragicos decet ira cothurnos:  
       usibus e mediis soccus habendus erit.  
 liber in adversos hostes stringatur iambus,  
       seu celer extremum seu trahat ille pedem.  
 blanda pharetratos elegeia cantet Amores,  
       et levis arbitrio ludat amica suo.  
 Callimachi numeris non est dicendus Achilles,  
       Cydlippe non est oris, Homero, tui.  
 quis feret Andromaches peragentem Thaida partes?  
       peccat in Andromache Thaida quisquis agat.  
 Thais in arte mea est; lascivia libera nostra est."

In one respect, at least, Ovid had a strong sense of propriety and this firm intention to use only suitable

themes and style in his love poetry has a considerable impact on his handling of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline.

Having glanced at the major features of Ovid's literary intentions, it should now be possible to assess the literary functions of these subjects in his work. Chief among these is clearly their function as vehicles for humour. Much of the fun in Ovid's love poetry springs from his blithe reversal of moral notions cherished by the aristocracy.

In the Amores the activities associated with the aristocratic ideal provide Ovid with ample material for burlesque. This is particularly evident in his mock triumphs of Amores 1.2 and 2.12. Ovid also has fun at the expense of the aristocratic ideal by transferring the military terminology associated with the public career to the absurd skirmishes of love (e.g. Am. 1.7.35ff.) and to his elaborate treatment of the motif of the lover as a soldier (Am. passim, esp. 1.9). The aristocratic ideal has an important impact on the style as well as the subject matter of the Amores. Thus it provides the inspiration for both the content and style of the mock funeral "laudatio" in Amores 2.6 and the mock trial of Amores 2.7 and 2.8. In both these cases the literary function of the aristocratic ideal is overwhelmingly humorous.

Similarly, Ovid's treatment of moral decline in the

Amores is directed towards obtaining the maximum possible comic effects. Ovid does this by showing himself as possessing most of the traditional symptoms of moral decline and glorying in them (Am. 1.4, 2.4, 2.7, 2.8, 2.17, 2.19, 3.1) and by making fun of traditional moral values (e.g. Am. 3.4.36ff. in his taunt against the "rusticus" who cherishes traditional values). He also uses traditionally worded attacks on moral decline in a similar way to Tibullus and Propertius for humorous characterization in his portrait of the bawd in Amores 1.8, an elegy which shows a heavy debt to comedy. Only on one occasion does Ovid utter a genuine outcry against the moral decadence of his own age (Am. 3.8). Significantly, the objects of his criticism are the bloodshed, arrogance and corruption associated with the public career. In this case the subjects of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline fuse together in an impassioned poem of protest.

In the remaining love poems the humorous function of these two subjects is dominant. The Medicamina Faciei contains a brief, humorous skit on traditional notions about moral decline in which Ovid mocks nostalgia for the past (M.F. 11ff.) and compliments girls on their enthusiasm for lavish adornment (17ff.), which serious moralists generally present as a sign of moral decline.

In the Ars amatoria Ovid continues the reversals of traditional moral sentiments which had characterized the Amores and maintains his characterization of himself as an



immoral anti-hero. Further humour is gained in his treatment of the aristocratic ideal by his adoption of the didactic style associated with traditional moralists. Ovid parodies their bracing lectures to "Romana iuventus" (A.A. 1.459ff.) unmercifully, but his hortatory enthusiasm about the utility of rhetoric is not directed to the winning of glory in the public career, but to the winning of women in the courts of Rome. His humorous characterization of himself as a dissipated exponent of moral decline is taken a stage further by this adoption of a didactic pose and by his advice to his acolytes on techniques for corrupting others (e.g. A.A. 1.355). This is paralleled by his advice to women in Book 3 to cultivate skill in activities traditionally seen as symptoms of moral decline, such as dancing and gambling (A.A. 3.349ff.). Ovid also distorts traditional concepts about moral decline for humorous effect by debunking the idealization of the past (e.g. in his mockery of the legend of Romulus and the rape of the Sabines in A.A. 1.100ff.) and by portraying the decadent present as his notion of the ideal society (A.A. 3.113ff.). The function of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline in this poem is consistently humorous.

Much the same is true of Ovid's treatment of these subjects in the Remedia Amoris. His most brilliant stroke of humour here lies in the delivery of a pompous lecture on the value of the public career and the moral dangers of leisure (R.A. 135ff.). This lecture constitutes a sparkling parody of the pontifications of traditional moralists. Its

humour springs from the fact that Ovid's advice is directed not towards obtaining glory in the service of the state, but release from the bondage of a woman. Once again the aristocratic ideal and moral decline have been pressed into service as subjects for humour.

It is unmistakably clear that Ovid's primary literary aim is humour. In his love poetry he sets out to give a sophisticated and farcical view of love, which is unique in Latin literature. All his efforts are bent towards amusing his audience and maintaining the lightness of subject matter and style which he considered appropriate to elegy. Perhaps the most significant item in his repertoire of humorous techniques is his skill in transforming pompous, morally weighted themes into subjects for humour. This skill is nowhere more apparent than in his witty and subversive treatment of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline. Although these subjects do figure in genuine protest, their primary function in Ovid's work is overwhelmingly humorous. Suitably transformed from their traditional shape, they play a major part in giving Ovid's love poetry its inimitable humorous vitality.

It should not be supposed that the subjects of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline have precisely the same emphasis and literary functions in all three poets' works. As their literary intentions differ, so does their handling of these subjects. Tibullus is more concerned than Propertius and Ovid with creating an escapist world of

rustic peace and love, from which war is shut out. It is in the evocation of the tension between this fantasy world and the real world of greed and bloodshed that the themes of moral decline and the aristocratic ideal play their most important role in his work. Propertius, like Tibullus and Ovid, hates the bloodshed associated with the aristocratic ideal and protests against it. However he shows a more serious approach to private morality than either of the other elegists and consequently there is less humour in his poetry than in theirs. Alone among the elegists, he delivers a seriously intended denunciation of the decline in private moral values in Rome. However Ovid, with his gay, anarchic sense of humour, rarely misses a chance to use the aristocratic ideal and moral decline as subjects for fun.

Yet, in spite of these minor differences, the similarities in the elegists' handling of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline are overwhelmingly apparent. All three of them re-shape the moral terminology associated with the aristocratic ideal and moral decline and use it in unexpected contexts for humour and protest against war. All three of them transform the traditional versions of the past and the ideal society, rejecting the concept of an austere, warlike community and replacing it with their own Utopias of peace and love. All three of them alter the traditional notion of moral decline, sometimes by shifting the emphasis from public to private morality and sometimes by using diatribes on moral decline for humorous purposes.

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All three of them, at some time, express antagonism towards the public career and use the subjects of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline as vehicles for humour and protest against war.

Although this does not necessarily indicate the values which the elegists held in real life,<sup>38</sup> it certainly constitutes a literary experiment of great interest and originality. Up until this time, the aristocratic ideal and moral decline had generally been taken very seriously in Latin literature. By contrast, as part of their humorous and emotional evocation of the private world of love, the elegists approached these subjects in a novel spirit of subversion. In doing so, they undoubtedly issued a powerful challenge to the values of the nobility. It was a challenge which the nobles took seriously. It is perhaps no surprise that when Ovid died on the Black Sea, a victim of aristocratic revenge, the genre of love elegy died with him.

## APPENDIX

In order to grasp the precise meaning of the Roman aristocratic concept of moral decline it seemed desirable to undertake a study of their moral vocabulary. The obvious sources for such a study were the works of the two major first century historians, Sallust and Livy. These writers provide a valuable contrast to the love elegists, since they give serious and lengthy re-statements of the traditional aristocratic view of moral decline. The study of their moral terminology has been presented as an appendix, since it falls outside the main argument of the thesis. However it is strongly recommended that it be read in conjunction with chapter two.

It would appear from reading Sallust that the nobility in Rome held, along with so many other monopolies, a monopoly on vice. Gluttony and sexual perversion have always been a fashionable privilege of the rich and powerful, but it is not principally at these forms of private aberration that Sallust directs his attacks on moral decline. It is at political corruption. His primary concern is the welfare of the state. The vices which Sallust deplores are those likely to injure general prosperity and political harmony. The virtues he commends are those likely to promote political equilibrium. To understand his view of moral decline it will be necessary to examine firstly his notion of a just society and the virtues associated with it, the process of moral decline and the vices it involved, and his treatment of Rome in his own times. By studying the vocabulary he uses to describe these, it should be possible to build up a detailed picture of the traditional concept of moral decline.

Sallust's vision of the establishment of a good society, the subsequent process of moral decline and the degenerate society of his own days is clearly set out in B.C. 59. He states his intention :

"supra repetere ac paucis instituta maiorum domi militiaeque, quo modo rem publicam habuerint quantamque reliquerint, ut paulatim immutata ex

pulcherrima atque optuma pessuma ac flagitiosissima  
facta sit, disserere."

Unlike the love elegists (who picture the ideal society as existing in a remote, mythical Golden Age), Sallust sets his vision of a good society in a precise place and time - in Rome before the destruction of Carthage in 146B.C. This society is described at some length in the B.C.5-9. He begins by stressing the "concordia" between the Aborigines and the Trojans who united to found Rome. Elsewhere in Sallust's work this word has the sense of "political harmony" or "stability".<sup>1</sup> He then goes on to stress their "virtus" in warfare and their readiness to establish friendly relations with other nations through kindness:

"magisque dandis quam accipiundis beneficiis  
amicitias parabant." (B.C. 6.5).

Their "virtus" in war was motivated by "cupido gloriae". He says that the young men took more pleasure in arms than in banquets and women, and nothing was too hard for them, since "virtus omnia domuerat". Their aim in life is summed up as "gloriam ingentem, divitias honestas." The ablest men were also the busiest:

"prudentissimus quisque maxume negotiosus erat"  
(B.C. 8.5).

He says that good morals were cultivated at home and in the army, there was "concordia maxuma, minuma avaritia." Civil strife did not exist, since:

"Iurgia, discordias, simultates cum hostibus exercebant, cives cum civibus de virtute certabant." (B.C. 9.2).

Similarly at the beginning of the central digression in the B.J., Rome is described as being free from civil strife before the fall of Carthage: "Nam ante Carthaginem deletam populus et senatus Romanus placide, modesteque inter se rem publicam tractabant, neque gloriae neque dominationis certamen inter civis erat." (B.J. 41.2). In the B.C. Sallust says that the Romans guarded themselves and the state by two qualities: "audacia in bello, ubi pax evenerat aequitate". And in peacetime they ruled "beneficiis magis quam metu."

It may be profitable at this point to examine the virtues of Sallust's ideal (or idealized) Romans. Among the most important are "concordia", "aequitas", "probitas", "fides" and, what may perhaps be called the "dynamic virtues", "labor", "industria" and "virtus".

Sallust undoubtedly considered justice and political harmony very important (as his diatribes against civil strife in B.J. 31 and 41-42 prove), but the virtues associated with political harmony occur very seldom in his works - "abstinentia" (2), "aequitas" (2), "continentia" (1), "probitas" (8), "concordia" (13).<sup>2</sup> This may well indicate just how sadly they were lacking in Rome, according to Sallust.



"Concordia" is used very sparingly. It occurs only twice in the B.C. (both times in his description of the virtuous ancient Romans), and twice in the B.J., where it has the sense of "political harmony". Gaius Memmius, the tribune of the plebs, in his speech to the commons, asks what hope they have of "concordia" when the nobles wish to dominate them. "Nam fidei quidem aut concordiae quae spes est? Dominari illi volunt vos liberi esse." (B.J. 31.23). It is significant that in this case it is the nobles who are guilty of destroying "concordia." It also appears in the speech of Micipsa to Jugurtha (B.J. 10), as the quality which makes small states great. "Nam concordia res crescunt" (B.J. 10.6). Jugurtha destroys the "concordia" of Numidia by his lust for power. Its use in the fragments of the Histories is also enlightening, since it is four times linked with "pax".

"Aequitas" occurs only twice - once in the description of early Rome, and once in B.C. 2.5, where it is coupled with "continentia" and both are ultimately overwhelmed by "lubido" and "superbia".<sup>3</sup> Similarly "abstinentia" occurs only twice. It appears in the eulogy of Cato, where it is linked with "virtus" and "pudor" (B.C. 54.6), and once again in B.C. 3.3, in Sallust's description of his entry into public life. Here too it is connected with "pudor" and "virtus", and all three have been replaced by "audacia", "largitio" and "avaritia". And the good old ancient Roman virtue of "pietas", on one occasion has

vanished along with the good old ancient Romans (B.C. 12.4), while on another it is up for sale by the wicked senators in the Jugurthan war ( B.J. 31.12).

"Fides" is one of the major casualties in the course of moral decline. But Sallust also uses it frequently in connection with Catiline, presumably for ironical effect. One of his disciples, Sempronius, is characterized by her lack of "fides" (B.C. 24.2) and, in B.C. 16.2, Sallust says that Catiline had taught his followers "fidem, fortunas, pericula vilia habere". However Catiline, in his speech to his followers, twice appeals to their "fides" (B.C. 20.2, 20.10). Sallust obviously uses the word here to point out the total distortion of moral values involved in Catiline's conspiracy. As D.C. Earl points out, "The perversion and debasement of noble sentiments to personal and party ends, typical of the age, remain the keynotes of Catiline's propaganda to the end".<sup>4</sup> In the B.J. "fides" is generally conspicuous by its absence. It is usually the nobles who lack this virtue. In B.J. 16.4 Sallust alleges that Jugurtha was able to win over most of the senate, since "paucis carior fides quam pecunia fuit". In Memmius's speech (B.J. 31.12), the senators have put their "fides" up for sale. In B.J. 24.10, Adherbal appeals to the "fides amicitiae" of the senate, but Jugurtha's bribed partisans overrule his plea for help. However it is significant that Roman "fides" before the fall of Carthage is considered trustworthy.

Adherbal says in his speech, "Familia nostra cum populo Romano bello Carthaginensi amicitiam instituit, quo tempore magis fides eius quam fortuna petunda erat." (B.J. 14.5).

Sallust places great stress on what may be called the "dynamic virtues" - "labor", "industria" and "virtus". "Probitas" can conveniently be included with these, since it is several times associated with "industria" (e.g. in the praise of Marius B.J. 63.2, and in the prologue to the B.J. 1.3). Sallust says that fortune cannot bestow nor take away these qualities, implying that they are obtained by effort. "Probitas" is one of the virtues destroyed by "avaritia" after the fall of Carthage (B.C. 10.4), and Sallust complains that in his own times men try to outdo their ancestors "divitiis et sumptibus, non probitate neque industria". (B.J. 4.7).<sup>5</sup> This is interesting, because it reflects the aristocratic tradition that men should struggle to equal or surpass the glory of their ancestors.

Sallust also stresses the importance of "industria" in the prologue to the B.J. (1.2) and in B.J. 76.1, he makes it clear that "industria" can overcome virtually all obstacles. Metellus's "industria" triumphs over "arma, tela, locos, tempora, denique naturam ipsam". "Labor" is also important. In B.C. 10.1, Sallust says that Rome grew great "labore atque iustitia" and in

B.C. 2.5 he says that when "labor" is replaced by "desidia", fortune changes along with habit. It is often associated with military prowess. In B.C. 7.5, describing the Romans' hardiness in war, he says that to them "non labor insolitus". A poor army is unable to bear "labor". Albinus hands over to Metellus an army that is "iners, imbellis, neque periculi neque laboris patiens". (B.J. 44.1). Marius improves military discipline by sharing the "labor" of his soldiers (B.J. 100.4). The concept is important in his speech to his army (B.J. 85). He stresses his own ability to endure "labor", (85.33), promises that he will never exploit the "labor" of his men to gain glory for himself (85.34), and finally declares that "labor" is the activity proper to man. ("laborem viris convenire" 85.40).

However, the most important place in Sallust's hierarchy of virtues is occupied by "virtus". Syme points out that " "virtus" as conceived by Sallust seems to be something solid, distinct and authentically native."<sup>6</sup> It certainly covers a wide range of activities and attributes in Sallust's work. It can refer to mental excellence (B.C. 1.4; 2.3), or to courage, whether physical or spiritual (B.C. 20.2; 53.1; B.J. 87.3), to military prowess (B.C. 7.5; 58.19; B.J. 9.2; 52.2; 97.5), or to outstanding merit of any kind, (B.C. 7.2; 8.4; 12.1; 51.42; 53.4; B.J. 6.4; 4.8; 85.31). Essentially it is a quality which demands to be given expression in public life. The

military "virtus" of the ancient Romans is stressed and Caesar in B.C. 54.4 longs for a new war "ubi virtus enitescere posset". It is the "virtus" of the holder which lends dignity to a praetorship, a consulship or any other office (B.J. 4.8). Sallust says that he often heard Quintus Maximus, Publius Scipio and other eminent Romans declare that when they looked at the masks of their ancestors "vehementissime sibi animum ad virtutem accendi" (B.J. 4.5), and they could not rest until "virtus eorum famam atque gloriam adaequaverit". (B.J. 4.60). Moreover, Sallust attributes all the remarkable deeds of the early Romans to a single quality - "egregiam virtutem". (B.C. 53.4).

The rare passages where Sallust praises someone are also revealing. Caesar and Cato (B.C. 53.4) are presented as men "ingenti virtute". Sallust uses his favourite literary device of antithesis to highlight the differences between them. Although they were men of different character, "divorsis moribus", Cato and Caesar were equally matched in "magnitudo animi" and in "gloria". Caesar was noted for his "beneficia", his "munificentia", his "mansuetudo" and "misericordia". He won friendship by his generosity and his easy-going nature, "facilitas". However he was very energetic and had trained himself to work hard and sleep little.

Cato belonged to the tradition of the ancient Romans. He lived a life of "integritas" and was renowned

for his "severitas" and "constantia". He never stooped to bribery ("nihil largiundo") and he cultivated "modestia", "decus" and, once again, "severitas". His life was characterized by "virtus", "pudor" and "abstinentia". Sallust says that "Non divitiis cum divite neque factione cum factioso, sed cum strenuo virtute, cum modesto pudore, cum innocente abstinentia certabat."

The competitiveness of this is remarkable and seems to owe much to the aristocratic tradition. Sallust complains that in his own times, however, "At contra quis est omnium his moribus quin divitiis et sumptibus, non probitate neque industria cum maioribus suis contendat." (B.J. 4.7). However Syme points out that "Sallust .... took over the old aristocratic ideal of "virtus" and restated it, to the detriment of the nobles, in terms of personal achievement."<sup>8</sup> Sallust's description of Marius is significant in relation to this. He says that, with the exception of noble ancestry, Marius had all the qualifications necessary for the consulship, namely "industria, probitas, militiae magna scientia, animus belli ingens, domi modicus, lubricitatis et divitiarum victor, tantum modo gloriae avidus." (B.J. 63.2).

In the B.C. 10-13 and in the B.J. 41-42, Sallust gives a graphic account of the process of moral decline in Rome. In both cases he traces the cause of this to the destruction of Carthage and the consequent relief of

external pressure on the Romans, which had formerly constrained them to preserve internal peace. Following the destruction of Carthage he pictures a progressive degeneration leading finally "to utter ruin, moral, social, political." 9

According to Sallust the stages in Rome's downfall were marked by a succession of vices. First came greed for money, then greed for power - "primo pecuniae, deinde imperi cupido crevit." Sallust says that these were the cause of all the subsequent evils "ea quasi materies omnium malorum fuere" (B.C. 10.4). He goes on to explain "Namque avaritia fidem, probitatem ceterasque artis bonas subvortit, pro his superbiam, crudelitatem, deos neglegere, omnia venalia habere edocuit." (B.C. 10.5). "Ambitio" drove many men to become false, to make friendships and enmities according to self interest, and "magisque voltum quam ingenium bonus habere." Sulla allowed his army in the East to behave "contra morem maiorum luxuriose nimisque liberaliter." When they introduced foreign "luxuria" into Rome, they gave the final impetus to its rush to ruin. The young were corrupted by "luxuria", "avaritia" and "superbia". They learnt "rapere, consumere, sua parvi pendere, aliena cupere, pudorem, pudicitiam, divina atque humana promiscua, nihil pensi neque moderati habere". People practised ruinous extravagance and their appetites became perverted.

Sallust gives much the same picture in the central digression of the B.J. (41-42). Before the destruction of Carthage, the senate and the people of Rome lived harmoniously, "neque gloriae neque dominationis certamen inter civis erat; metus hostilis in bonis artibus civitatem retinebat." (B.J. 41.2). But when that fear was removed, "lascivia" and "superbia" arose. It is essentially a political discourse and Sallust comes quickly to the point of the attack. The nobles began to abuse their "dignitas", the people their "libertas" and the result was strife between the two parties, so that "res publica, quae media fuerat, dilacerata". (41.5). It is noteworthy that the commons were not really less vicious, but merely less organized than the nobles.

However, the nobles were Sallust's chief target for attack, because of their greater power. He goes on to describe the monopolization of power and wealth by the nobles, in contrast to the impotence and poverty of the people. (41.7). Once again, matters grew worse when "potentia" was joined by "avaritia". When the Gracchi, "qui veram gloriam iniustae potentiae anteponerent" (41.10) attempted a more just distribution of wealth, they were ruthlessly put down. The nobles then used their victory to get rid of their enemies ("multos mortalis ferro aut fuga exstinxit") and to institute a reign of terror ("plusque in relicum sibi timoris quam potentiae addidit").



Sallust mentions a number of vices as causes or by-products of moral decline. The primary vices are "ambitio" and "avaritia", of which "ambitio" is the lesser ("propius virtutem"), since it has the same goals as honourable zeal for advancement - namely, "gloriam, honorem, imperium". (B.C. 11.2). The difference is that "ambitio" proceeds not through "bonas artes", but "dolus atque fallaciis". It is significant that all its aims are those of a public career. Sallust twice uses this word in connection with himself, speaking of the "ambitio mala", which led him away from writing history into politics. (B.C. 4.2). He also admits that amidst the corruption of public life, he too was held captive "ambitione corrupta". (B.C. 3.4). It is clear that "ambitio" was a comparatively mild form of vice since Cato, in his speech to the senate, implies that it might have been advanced as a plea for lenience to the young men involved in the conspiracy - "deliquere homines adulescentuli per ambitionem." (B.C. 52.26). However, earlier in the same speech, it has undesirable connotations, when he says that "omnia virtutis praemia ambitio possidet". On several occasions it is associated with attempts to curry favour with potential political supporters (B.J. 96.3, 85.9, 100.5, 86.3). Significantly in B.J. 45.1, it appears as the opposite of "saevitia". (Metellus manages to steer a course between "ambitio" and "saevitia").

"Avaritia", on the contrary, is thoroughly bad. It appears in public life, linked with "audacia" and "largitio" (B.C. 3.3) and along with "luxuria" is responsible for ruining public morals. (B.C. 5.8). It destroys "fides", "probitas" and the rest of the "bonae artes" and "pro his superbiam, crudelitatem, deos neglegere, omnia venalia habere edocuit". (B.C. 10.4) and it corrupts the young (12.2). Cato asserts that "industria", "iustum imperium" and "animus in consulendo liber" have been replaced in Rome by "luxuria", "avaritia", "publice egestas" and "privatim opulentia".

One of the major themes of the B.J. is the political corruption at Rome, which is reflected particularly in the "avaritia" of the nobles. Jugurtha's advisers assure him that "Romae omnia venalia esse", (B.J. 8.1), and Sallust devotes much of the work to proving the truth of this. "Avaritia" appears as virtually a prerogative of the nobles (for instance the "avaritia nobilitatis" in B.J. 13.5 and the "avaritia" of the consul Calpurnius in B.J. 29.1). In the speech of the tribune of the plebs, Gaius Memmius, the nobles are pictured as "homines sceleratissimi, cruentis manibus, immani avaritia, nocentissimi et eidem superbissimi quibus fides, decus, pietas, postrema honesta atque inhonesta omnia quaestui sunt". (B.J. 31.12). Sallust implies that Roman "avaritia" was notorious abroad. Jugurtha urges his men to defend their country against Roman "avaritia" (B.J. 49.2) and he

tells Bocchus that the Romans have "profunda avaritia". There is a certain pleasant irony in this, considering the use Jugurtha himself had made of Roman "avaritia". In B.J. 103.5 Sallust suggests that the Romans were renowned for the quality, when he mentions the "fama Romanorum avaritiae".

The "political" vices - "largitio", "licentia", "superbia" and "crudelitas" are important and occur fairly frequently. "Superbia" is particularly likely to arise in someone holding office. In B.J. 85.1 Marius describes it sarcastically as the normal behaviour of a man in office. And in B.C. 51, 13-14, Caesar says that there is no place for "licentia" in ruling the state ("in maxuma fortuna minuma licentia est"), because what is called anger in others, in a ruler is called "superbia atque crudelitas". In B.J. 41.3, Sallust says that "lascivia" and "superbia" are fostered by prosperity, and they lead to party strife. When the rule of the kings degenerated into "superbiam dominationemque", the early Romans appointed consuls, to prevent men from growing insolent through "licentia". (B.C. 6.7). Sallust shows the Roman nobles of his own time as being filled with "superbia" to such an extent that they thought the consulship was almost polluted if it was held by a new man. (B.C. 23.6). But when danger threatened, they had to give up their "invidia" and "superbia" and endure seeing Cicero as consul. "Superbia" is frequently associated with "licentia" and "crudelitas". "Largitio" is practised chiefly by Jugurtha (B.J. 15.1, 15-5).

More interesting are the apparently private vices of self-indulgence and laziness. Cruelty and rapacity are obvious targets for criticism in any society, but the intense hostility to laziness apparent in Sallust's work is a peculiarity of Roman thought. The self-indulgent vices of "sumptus", "lascivia" and "luxuria" play an important part in both the B.C. and the B.J. Although these may appear to be merely private forms of entertainment, it can quickly be seen that they have great political significance. "Sumptus" occurs only infrequently. It is one of the vices of the young men in Catiline's circle (B.C. 13.5) and enables him to entice them into the conspiracy. And Catiline does not spare his own "sumptus" in acquiring their loyalty (B.C. 14.6). The women among his followers meet their enormous expenses ("sumptus") first by prostitution, but when their earning capacity dwindles with age, they are obliged to turn to revolution. One of the symptoms of degeneracy in the Rome of Sallust's time is that people strive to surpass their ancestors in "sumptus".<sup>10</sup> "Lascivia", along with "licentia", is responsible for demoralizing Albinus's army in Africa (B.J. 39.5) - again with consequences for the state.

"Lubido" is another vaguely defined vice, which has definite political consequences. At times it seems to be associated with sexual excesses, as in B.C. 13.3, where "lubido stupri" is one of the passions of the decadent

nobles of Sallust's own times. Some of Sulla's veterans, reduced to poverty by "lubido" and "luxuria", are approached by Manlius to join the conspiracy. (B.C. 28.4). Most frequently "lubido" has the sense of capricious or hasty judgment, resulting in arbitrary political behaviour. In B.C. 51.3, Cato says that "si lubido possidet, ea dominatur, animus nihil valet". Sulla, in B.C. 5.6, and the nobles who killed the Gracchi (B.J. 31.7) are guilty of high-handed political behaviour caused by "lubido". Even when the slaughter of the followers of the Gracchi ended, it was not law, but mere caprice ("lubido") which put a stop to it. "Luxuria" has already been mentioned as one of the major causes of moral decline in the state.<sup>11</sup> It also appears as a motivation for crime amongst some of the conspirators of the B.C. Sempronia, among her other attractive vices, had too much skill in the accomplishments of "luxuria". It was "luxuria" combined with "inopia" that drove her to crime. In Marius's speech in B.J. 85, Sallust sums up the fundamental Roman objection to these forms of vice. Marius says that "iniustissime luxuria et ignavia pessumae artes, illis qui coluere eas nihil efficiunt, rei publicae innoxiae cladi sunt."

Similarly, the "lazy" vices, "ignavia", "inertia", "socordia" and "desidia" are considered disgraceful, because they do harm to the state. Cato tells the senators that if they abandon themselves to "socordia" and "ignavia", it is useless to call on the gods to save the

state. (B.C. 51.29). The use of the word "ignavia" in Memmius's speech is particularly enlightening. Here it appears as political apathy. The failure of the plebs to take an active part in politics is culpable, because it allows the nobles to usurp the rights of the commons and suppress their freedom. The plebs are "ab ignavia atque socordia corruptus". (B.J. 31.2). In B.J. 85.14, Marius accuses the nobles of "ignavia". Sallust deplores it in the prologue to the B.J. and defends himself against possible charges of "ignavia" for choosing to write history, rather than remain in politics (B.J. 4.4). He says that he took up writing history in order not to waste his "bonum otium" in "socordia atque desidia" (B.C. 4.1). In B.J. 4.4 he says that he wants his "otium" to be profitable for Rome.

Sallust seems to regard "otium" as a desirable but dangerous state, easily misused. He admits that "otium" is desirable, but says in B.C. 10.2 that "otium" and "divitiae" turned out to be a burden and a curse after the fall of Carthage "otium, divitiae, optanda alias, oneri miseriaeque fuere". Similarly Sulla's army in Asia is ruined by "otium". "Loca amoena, voluptaria facile in otio ferocis militum animos molliverant". (B.C. 11.5). And in B.J. 41, he says that the "otium" the Romans had longed for in adversity turned out to be more cruel and bitter than adversity itself, because when they obtained it, party strife appeared for the first time. In spite

of Rome's "otium" and "divitiae", there were still citizens who wanted to ruin the country. (B.C. 36.4). And the young men who could have lived "in otio vel magnifice vel molliter", preferred war to peace. (B.C. 17.6). It is probably needless to point out how incoherent and self contradictory Sallust is in his descriptions of the conspirators. The important fact is that he considered "otium" a potentially dangerous and enervating state.

Sallust evidently considered that Rome had reached the nadir of moral decline in his own times. He expresses this point of view forcefully on several occasions. He attacks the gluttony, sexual excesses and craze for building of the nobles in B.C. 12.3, and in B.C. 14.1 he says that "in tanta tamque corrupta civitate" Catiline found it easy to surround himself with criminals. In B.C. 37.5, he makes the vivid comment that "omnes, quos flagitium facinus domo expulerat, ei Romam sicut in sentinam confluxerant". In B.C. 38, he condemns both the nobles and the plebs, saying that all of them "bonum publicum simulantes pro sua quisque potentia certabant". He adds that "utrique victoriam crudeliter exercebant". (B.C. 38.4). However the nobles are generally portrayed as the chief culprits in political misbehaviour. In the B.J. Sallust frequently speaks of the "superbia" and "avaritia" of the nobles in his own times. Memmius says that plundering the treasury or extorting money from the allies have become so commonplace as to be disregarded. But the

senators have done even worse - they have put the country up for sale. "Non peculatus aerari factus est neque per vim sociis ereptae pecuniae, quae quamquam gravia sunt, tamen consuetudine iam pro nihilo habentur. Hosti accerumo prodita senatus auctoritas, proditum imperium vostrum est; domi militiaeque res publica venalis fuit." (B.J. 31.25). And in B.J. 4.7, he says that in his own times people rise in politics "furtim et per latrocinia."

The corruption in Rome is given particularly vivid expression in Catiline's speech to the senate (B.C. 51). Sallust uses antithesis to point up the contrast between the appearance and the reality of politics in Rome. Cato energetically attacks the hypocrisy and political abuses of the times. He says that "Quia bona aliena largiri liberalitas, malarum rerum audacia fortitudo vocatur, eo res publica in extremo sita est. Sint sane, quoniam ita se mores habent, liberales ex sociorum fortunis, sint misericordes in furibus aerari; ne illi sanguinem nostrum largiantur et, dum paucis sceleratis parcunt, bonos omnis perditum eant". (B.C. 51.12) Further on in the speech, he accuses the senators of scheming for their own interests and of being slaves to pleasure, money and influence ("voluptas", "pecunia" and "gratia"). Sallust's intense conviction that standards of public morality had degenerated in Rome is summed up in his statement that the "res publica" had changed from being "pulcherruma atque optuma" to being "pessuma ac flagitiosissima". (B.C. 5.9).



What emerges very clearly from this is that Sallust's preoccupations were overwhelmingly political. The situations which he represents in terms of moral decline are situations of political crisis. The vices he associates with moral decline - "avaritia", "ambitio", "lubido", "largitio", "superbia", "licentia", "insolentia", "crudelitas", "luxuria", "lascivia", "sumptus" - all have political significance. His emphasis on the importance of service to the state and the pursuit of "gloria" in war and politics is characteristically Roman, as is his criticism of failure to take part in public life. The notion of moral decline was a traditional theme in Latin literature, but Sallust gives it a distinctive, personal expression in his work by using it as a vehicle to attack general political corruption in Rome, and, above all, the monopolization of power and wealth by the nobles. It is ironical that the aristocrats' own moral tradition should have been thus used as a weapon against themselves.

Livy believed that the early Romans rose to power and glory because of their outstanding moral excellence, but detected a sad decline in the moral standards of their descendants. It was largely in order to place on record this process of growth and decline that he wrote his monumental history. In the Preface<sup>12</sup> to Book 1, he outlines the intention of his work. He says that he will find satisfaction in commemorating the deeds of the greatest people in the world : "Ut cumque erit, iuvabit tamen rerum gestarum memoriae principis terrarum populi pro virili parte et ipsum consuluisse". (1 pr 3). However he goes on to express the view that Rome is destroying herself with her own strength. He says that most people will be less interested in the history of early times than in the account of their own, "festinantibus ad haec nova, quibus iam pridem praevalentis populi vires se ipsae conficiunt". (1 pr 4). Livy himself, on the contrary, seeks an escape from the troubles of his own time in writing history about the early period - "ego contra hoc quoque laboris praemium petam, ut me a conspectu malorum quae nostra tot per annos vidit aetas, tantispe i certe dum prisca illa tota mente repeto, avertam, omnis expers curae quae scribentis animum, etsi non flectere a vero, sollicitum tamen efficere posset". (1 pr 5).

Clearly, then, Livy believes that Rome in his times is in a state of crisis, of a kind unknown to the early

Romans. He undoubtedly believes that some sort of moral decline has taken place in Rome and he asks his readers to contemplate the wholesome society of early times and the progressive degeneration which succeeded it : "ad illa mihi pro se quisque acriter intendat animum, quae vita, qui mores fuerint, per quos viros quibusque artibus domi militiaeque et partum et auctum imperium sit; labente deinde paulatim disciplina velut desidentis primo mores sequatur animo, deinde ut magis magisque lapsi sint, tum ire coeperint praecipites, donec ad haec tempora quibus nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus perventum est".

(1 pr 9). It may be profitable to examine Livy's descriptions of the early Romans and the virtues with which he credits them, before turning to his comments on the process of moral decline.

Livy does not set out a precise chronological scheme for the growth and decay of the old Roman character (although the lost later books might have been illuminating about his views on the subject). Nor is his brief description of the early Romans in the Preface very helpful. He does not consider their virtues in depth here, but rather stresses the absence of particular vices in their society - "avaritia", "luxuria", "luxus" and "libido". "Aut me amor negotii suscepti fallit, aut nulla unquam res publica nec maior nec sanctior nec bonis exemplis ditior fuit, nec in quam civitatem tam serae avaritia luxuriaque immigraverint, nec ubi tantus ac tam diu paupertati ac parsimoniae honos fuerit. Adeo quanto rerum minus, tanto

minus cupiditatis erat; nuper divitiae avaritiam et abundantes voluptates desiderium per luxum atque libidinem pereundi perdendique omnia invexere". (1 pr 11-12).

However Livy does gradually build up a picture of the early Romans as hard-working, brave in warfare, indifferent to material wealth, respectful of the gods, the laws and their elders, and living in harmony with their fellow citizens. His highest approval is given to political harmony ("concordia") and to prowess in war. He also lays considerable stress on the virtues associated with politics and warfare - "modestia", "fides", "virtus", "clementia", "prudentia", "disciplina."

To a lesser degree he is also concerned with the "private" virtues of "castitas" and "pudicitia". But even events involving these virtues frequently have important political consequences in Livy, as in the episodes of Verginia and Lucretia.

The most distinctive feature of early Roman political life, as Livy describes it, is "concordia ordinum". The word "concordia" occurs 74 times, almost invariably in political contexts. Livy stresses the "concordia ordinum" which prevailed in Rome during the siege of Veii. (5.7.1; 5.7.10). When the plebeians, anxious to match the equites in service to the state, offered themselves as footsoldiers for the campaign, Livy says that the

senators were overwhelmed by this evidence of "concordia".  
 "Beatam urbem Romanam et invictam et aeternam illa  
 concordia dicere, laudare equites, laudare plebem, diem  
 ipsum laudibus ferre, victam esse fateri comitatem  
 benignitatemque senatus". (5.7.10).

In 6.42.12, after a long quarrel, the senate and the plebs are reunited in "concordia". In 7.40.4, Corvus tells the mutinous soldiers that he wants "concordia" with them, not victory over them. Private ambition (or renunciation of it) can also have an important effect on the "concordia" of the state. In 7.41.7, Salonius sacrifices his career to the "concordia civitatis", and in 7.22.8 the announcement by a plebeian C. Marcius Rutulus that he intends to stand as a candidate for the censorship creates havoc with the "concordia ordinum".<sup>13</sup> At times Livy seems to project the political vocabulary of his own times back into the past. He shows both Appius Claudius (5.3.5, 10) and the plebeian Publius Licinius Calvus using "concordia ordinum" as a catch-phrase to further their own political careers. However Livy does not suggest that complete "concordia" prevailed in early Rome. The consul Quinctius says in his speech to the plebs (c. 446 B.C.) "discordia ordinum est venenum urbis huius" (3.67.6). This statement probably reflects equally well Livy's view of Rome in his own times.

Some of the virtues related to political harmony which are important in Sallust, occur seldom in Livy.

"Abstinentia" does not appear at all, "probitas" appears only once (in 40.12.16, where Demetrius protests that he has gained his influence with the Romans through his "probitas") and "continentia" has only one significant occurrence. This is in 30.14.5, where Scipio says that the virtues on which he prides himself most are "temperantia et continentia libidinum". "Aequitas" appears on seven occasions. In 3.33.9, Livy says that the decemvirs who drew up the Ten Tables displayed "concordia" amongst themselves and "aequitas" to others. He also gives the names of five commissioners, who earned a fine reputation for themselves by their "aequitas" and "cura" in settling disputes over debts. (7.21.6). King Eumenes in his speech to the senators (37.53.28) appeals to their "prudentia" and "aequitas". The wicked Appius Claudius still has the effrontery to trust in the "aequitas" and "misericordia" of his fellow citizens. In 3.53.3, Livy says that Icilius and the other citizens based their hopes "in aequitate rerum plus quam in armis". Commenting on the results of an election in 445 B.C., Livy praises the voters for their moderation and fairness. He even demands "Hanc modestiam aequitatemque et altitudinem animi ubi nunc in uno inveneris, quae tum populi universi fuit?" (4.6.12). The "modestia" and "aequitas" of the voters were displayed by the fact that they elected all patrician tribunes! In this instance Livy's pro-aristocratic bias has clearly influenced his choice of vocabulary.

Respect for the gods is another of the qualities which Livy admires in the early Romans, chiefly because of the honourable behaviour it produced. Commenting on the citizens' loyalty to an oath which they could have evaded, Livy remarks, "nondum haec quae nunc tenet saeculum neglegentia deum venerat, nec interpretando sibi quisque ius iurandum et leges aptas faciebat, sed suos potius mores ad ea accommodabat". (3.20.5). Clearly he valued religion highly for its social function.<sup>14</sup> In 10.40.10, he speaks approvingly of Spurius Papirius, "iuvenis ante doctrinam deos spernentem natus" because of his concern over a falsely reported omen from the sacred chickens.

Respect for the gods is generally coupled with respect for the law in Livy. Indeed in 1.21.1 "pietas" towards the gods leads directly to reverence for the law. Livy says that Numa taught the Romans to worship the gods and "ea pietate omnium pectora imbuerat, ut fides ac ius iurandum pro legum ac poenarum metu civitatem regerent".

"Pietas" plays an important role in Livy's work. It appears as right behaviour towards country, family, army commanders and the gods. In 4.42.9 four of the tribunes display their "pietas" towards their commander Gaius Sempronius. In 5.7.12 the senators commend both the infantry and the cavalry for their "pietas" towards their country. In 25.38.2 Marcius mentions his own "pietas"

towards the commanders of the army and in 26.41.4, Publius Scipio praises his soldiers for their "pietas" towards his father and uncle.

"Pietas" also appears as a strong obligation to show family solidarity, even if there are quarrels or differences of opinion within the family. In 7.5.2 and 7.5.8 Lucius Manlius's son, Titus, is praised for the "pietas" he shows towards his father, in spite of his father's harsh treatment of him. In 7.10.4, he is praised for his "pietas" "in patrem patriamque". Livy also gives an account of Gaius Claudius, who solicited help for his nephew Appius Claudius, even though he had not been reconciled with him, in order to try and save the Claudian house from complete disgrace. Livy comments "Erant quos moveret sua magis pietate quam eius pro quo agebat causa". (3.58.5). Coriolanus is recalled from treachery to the state by a sense of family "pietas" - "revocavit tamen a publico parricidio privata pietas". (28.29.1).

The demands of "pietas" can be confusing. On at least one occasion when there is conflict between the demands of the "pietas" due to one's country and the "pietas" due to one's family, family "pietas" wins. The elder Calavius pleads with his son not to kill Hannibal, saying that even if his son holds nothing sacred "sit nihil sancti, non fides, non religio, non pietas" (23.9.5), he should be held back from such a foolhardy



plan by the knowledge that it will bring destruction to them. Calavius yields to his father's entreaties, saying "Ego quidem .... quam patriae debeo pietatem exsolvam patri". Similarly in 39.47.10, the senators affirm that Demetrius will be a friend to the Romans in so far as his "pietas" to his father allows.

In 44.1.11 "pietas" and "fides" appear together as the qualities which have made the Romans so great. Quintus Marcius Philippus says that "favere enim pietati fideique deos, per quae populus Romanus ad tantum fastigii venerit". "Fides" is an important virtue, carrying connotations of a sense of honour and mercy. It is generally used to describe the behaviour of Romans. Camillus displays "fides Romana" in his refusal to accept the treacherous betrayal of the schoolboys of Falerii by their teacher (5.27.11). His honourable behaviour leads to peace. In 7.31.1 when the Romans are considering an alliance with Campania, Livy says that their honour ("fides") counted more than the hope of gain - "tamen tanta utilitate fides antiquior fuit". It is often associated with standards of conduct towards the conquered. In 8.25.11, Charilaus, delivering his city up to the Romans, says that it depends on "fides Romana" whether he will seem to have betrayed his country or to have saved it. Quintus Fabius, the master of the horse commits his life and fortunes to the "fides" and "virtus" of his men. To give oneself up to the "fidem clementiamque Romanorum" is the standard formula for surrendering.

The virtues which Livy stresses are concerned with right behaviour towards the gods, the state and the family in time of peace or war. So far the more peaceful virtues have been considered, but Livy also places great emphasis on the qualities of "clementia", "prudentia" and "disciplina", which are nearly always concerned with military skill and success in his works.

"Clementia" is almost always associated with the surrender of other nations to Rome or the punishment of reckless or mutinous Roman soldiers. In 36.27.6, Flaccus tells the Aetolians that their case depends on the "clementia" of the Roman people, and in 37.55.2 the Rhodians beg the Romans to show "clementia" in judging them. In 8.31.8 Quintus Fabius begs his soldiers to support him, so that he will have more chance of obtaining "clementia" from the dictator. Publius Scipio Africanus, speaking of his campaigns in Spain and Africa says that "se maiora clementiae benignitatisque quam virtutis bellicae monumenta reliquisse". (37.6.6).

Similarly "prudentia" is very often used to describe shrewdness or foresight in military matters (4.41.2, 6.24.9, 8.32.17). Masinissa won a battle in Africa against heavy odds because of the "virtus" and "prudentia" learnt in the Punic wars (29.30.9). "Vicit tamen et veterum militum virtus et prudentia inter Romana et Punica arma exercitati ducis".

"Disciplina" is another important virtue associated with military training. It is through "disciplina atque imperio" that Tiberius Sempronius turns a mob of slaves into a good army. (26.2.10). It is also seen as a method of coping with a harsh environment. Speaking of the Greeks in 34.8.4, Livy says that "Disciplina erat custos infirmitatis". Surprisingly, "audacia" does not play a very big role in Livy's works. It is quite frequently used in a pejorative sense (1.48.1, 1.33.8 and 2.55.11 are some examples) and, even when used in the sense of "bravery" (as in Marcius's speech to his soldiers in 25.38.11), it often carries connotations of rashness. Livy seems to value the cautious virtues more highly.

Willingness to serve in the army is also rated highly. Livy implies that the men of his own generation have grown so effete from soft living that it would be a harder task to raise an army from their numbers than it was in early Rome - despite the smaller population of early times. Commenting on the raising of a large army to fight against the Gauls and the Greeks in 348 B.C., he says "decem legiones scriptae dicuntur quaternum milium et ducenorum peditum equitumque trecenorum, quem nunc novum exercitum, si qua externa vis ingruat hae vires populi Romani, quas vix terrarum capit orbis, contractae in unum haud facile efficiant; adeo in quae laboramus sola crevimus, divitias luxuriamque". (7.25.8-9).

Livy also commends the unselfish patriotism and

generosity of the citizens of Rome during the Punic wars. He says that, although the state was unable to pay them immediately, contractors continued to supply clothing, grain and other necessities to the army in Spain, with the promise of payment later. Livy comments approvingly "*Ita mores eaque caritas patriae per omnes ordines velut tenore uno pertinebat*". (22.49.3). Similarly in 24.18, he describes the generosity of the citizens to the war effort, which spread contagiously from one class to another. And in 26.36, he describes how the consul Laevinus proposed that the senators should show a good example to the rest of the citizens by giving their gold and silver and bronze for the payment of the fleet. He says that "*Hunc consensum senatus equester ordo est secutus, equestris ordinis plebs*". (26.36.12).

The traditional virtues of "castitas" and "pudicitia" play very little part in Livy's work, except in the accounts of Lucretia (1.58.5; 1.58.7; 2.7.4) and Verginia (3.45.9; 3.48.8; 3.52.4; 3.61.4), where they have important political consequences. Livy undoubtedly had strong opinions on the value of "pudicitia" (as shown, for instance, in 38.24.12, where he tells the grisly and totally unimportant story of the woman who beheaded the man who had raped her, thus avenging her violated chastity), but he shows little interest in the degeneration of private sexual morality in his laments about moral decline - he is far more concerned with the morality of public life.

Livy accepts the traditional standards of the Roman aristocracy and their objectives in life - pre-eminence in politics and warfare. Consequently when he detects signs of moral decline in the state, it is these two great arenas of public life which concern him. He frequently attacks the misuse of wealth and political power and deplores the waning of the military virtues. Since the extant books only go down to 167 B.C., it is impossible to know for certain whether or not he envisaged a moral collapse precipitated by the fall of Carthage, as Sallust did. However, even in the surviving books, he attacks many of the vices which Sallust had criticized so scathingly.

Chief among these are the political vices of "avaritia", "superbia" and "crudelitas", which generally go together. In the Preface Livy makes it clear that he considers "avaritia" (along with "luxuria") to be one of the chief symptoms of moral decline. It will be useful to examine the contexts in which he uses this word, in order to see precisely what he means by it.

"Avaritia" is generally used by Livy to describe misgovernment, involving extortion and the exploitation of provincials and subject peoples. "Crudelitas" and "superbia" are frequently associated with it. Livy uses these words to describe the behaviour of both Romans and non-Romans, but they are most frequently applied to the

actions of the Carthaginians. In 22.50.6, the Carthaginians are called "avarissimus et crudelissimus hostis", and in 24.45.13, Livy refers to the "avaritia" and "crudelitas" of Hannibal. In 26.38.3, he describes Hannibal as "praeceps in avaritiam et crudelitatem animus". The Spaniards complain about the "avaritia" and "superbia" of the Carthaginians (27.17.12) and Livy says that "Locrensiū multitudō, exacerbata superbia atque avaritia Poenorum, ad Romanos inclinasset". (29.6.17). The leader of the soldiers who had escaped from Cannae says the Carthaginian is a barbarian "qui utrum avarior an crudelior sit vix existimari potest". (22.59.14). However, the Romans too display "avaritia", "superbia" and "crudelitas" on occasion (43.7.8; 43.4.5; 43.2.2; 4.10.7) and the most remarkable practitioner of "scelus", "lubido" and "avaritia" in the work is probably the Roman Pleminius (29.8.7, 29.9.12, 29.17.12, 29.17.18). Philip (44.24.9; 44.26.1-2; 44.27.8), Masinissa (42.23.5) and Nabis (33.44.8) are also noted for their "avaritia", "superbia" and "crudelitas".

At times Livy seems to indulge in a form of type-casting. With monotonous regularity the Carthaginians display their "crudelitas", "superbia" and "perfidia", almost as if they held a monopoly on those qualities. Indeed when listing Hannibal's vices in 21.4.9, Livy says that he showed "inhumana crudelitas perfidia plus quam Punica". In 42.47.7, he contrasts "typical" Roman behaviour with that of the Carthaginians and the Greeks.

He cites some examples of honourable behaviour (including the delivery of the treacherous schoolmaster to the Faliscans) and says "religionis haec Romanae esse, non versutiarum Punicarum neque calliditatis Graecae, apud quos fallere hostem quam vi superare gloriosius fuerit". (42.47.7). But he laments the fact that after the Punic Wars (c. 172 B.C.) this sense of Roman honour was already being replaced by "nova ac nimis callida ... sapientia". (42.47.9). The early Romans, according to Livy, would not have stooped to trickery to win a victory.

Another important quality of the early Roman character, as Livy depicts it, is self-restraint in political matters. In 26.22.14-15, he applauds the young men who, during the Punic Wars, asked their elders for advice on how to vote. Evidently the fashion for idealizing the past had some critics even in Livy's time, for he begins defensively, "Eludant nunc antiqua mirantis: non equidem, si qua sit sapientium civitas, quam docti fingunt magis quam norunt, aut principes graviores temperantioresque a cupidine imperii aut multitudinem melius moratam censeam fieri posse". He points out that such a thing would seem incredible in his own times, due to the diminished authority of parents over their children. "Centuriam vero iuniorum seniores consulere voluisse quibus imperium suffragio mandaret, vix ut veri simile sit parentum quoque hoc saeculo vilis levisque apud liberos auctoritas fecit".

Livy also deplores the lack of restraint in using money in his own times, and the enormous importance attached to material wealth. On several occasions he comments disapprovingly on the growing extravagance of performances in the arena (39.22.2; 41.27.6; 44.8.9; 44.18.8). And in Book 3.26.7, he points out the dictator Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus as an example of a man of outstanding "virtus", living in poverty. He addresses the men of his own time, who think that "virtus" can only be found where there is wealth, "Operae pretium est audire qui omnia prae divitiis humanae spernunt neque honori magno locum neque virtuti putant esse, nisi ubi effuse affluent opes". He complains that in his own time, the Romans grow only in wealth and luxury (7.25.9) "in quae laboramus sola crevimus, divitias luxuriamque".

"Luxuria" plays quite an important role in Livy's work. In the Preface, it appears as one of the major symptoms of moral decline. And it is one of the vices which Cato attacks in his speech to the senate in Book 34, about the Oppian law. This law forbade women to wear luxurious clothes or drive in carriages, "res parva dictu", as Livy admits, "sed quae studiis in magnum certamen excesserit". (34.1.1.). In this speech, Cato says that "avaritia" and "luxuria" have been the destruction of every great empire. "Saepe me querentem de feminarum, saepe de virorum nec de privatorum modo sed etiam magistratuum sumptibus audistis, diversisque duobus vitiis, avaritia et luxuria, civitatem laborare, quae



pestes omnia magna imperia everterunt". (34.4.2). He compares luxury to a wild beast - "luxuria non mota tolerabilior esset quam erit nunc, ipsis vinculis, sicut ferae bestiae, irritata, deinde emissa". (34.4.19).

"Luxuria" or "luxus" is frequently associated with cowardice or incompetence in battle, or the degeneration of the military virtues. In 40.1.4, since the praetor in the farther province of Spain had been sick, the consuls learnt that "luxuria et otio solutam disciplinam militarem esse". And Marcellus encourages his soldiers in 23.45.2 by telling them that the Carthaginians have lost all their strength after a winter of hard drinking and sexual activity amongst the Campanians - "et qui pugnent, marcere Campania luxuria, vino et scortis omnibusque lustris per totam hiemem confectos". Capua appears as a positive hotbed of "luxuria". In 7.29.5 the Campanians, "fluentes luxu", encounter the hardy Samnites in battle and are worsted, and in 7.32.7, Livy makes the unequivocal statement "Campanos quidem haud dubie magis nimio luxu fluentibus rebus mollitiaque sua quam in hostium victos esse". In 7.31.6, Livy says that the Campanians were famed for their "luxuria superbiaque". In Book 23, Livy describes Capua as "luxuriantem longa felicitate atque indulgentia fortunae, maxime tamen inter corrupta omnia licentia plebis sine modo libertatem exercentis". (23.2.1). Livy's hostility towards the Campanians seems to be closely bound up with his disapproval for the power of the plebs in Capua. In 23.4.4,

when talking about their senate, he says "iam vero nihil in senatu agi aliter quam si plebis ibi esset concilium". He then launches into a spirited attack on the "luxuria" of Capua, calling it "prona semper civitas in luxuriam non ingeniorum modo vitio sed affluentia copia voluptatum et inlecebris omnis amoenitatis maritimae terrestrique, tum vero ita obsequio principum et licentia plebei lascivire ut nec libidini nec sumptibus modus esset".

Livy accepts the tradition that foreign luxuries were first imported into Rome from Asia. In 39.6.7 (about 187 B.C.), Livy says "Luxuriae enim peregrinae origo ab exercitu Asiatico invecta in urbem est". He then gives a list of the luxurious furniture, woven materials and other goods which were imported and describes the increasing lavishness of banquets. But, he comments disapprovingly, "Vix tamen illa, quae tum conspiciebantur, semina erant futurae luxuriae". (39.6.9).

"Licentia" is another vice which Livy takes very seriously. Like "luxuria" it usually has a damaging effect on military prowess (as in 24.31.3, 25.20.6, 8.34.11). In 25.20.6 Gnaeus Fulvius and his soldiers are described as "in tantam licentiam socordiamque effusos ut nulla disciplina militiae esset", thus becoming an easy prey for Hannibal. In 8.34.11 the dictator Papirius describes the chaos which will afflict Rome if military discipline is slackened and "licentia" is allowed to prevail. In 45.36.8, Lucius Paulus is at the mercy of

the "avaritia" and "licentia" of his soldiers, who try to prevent him from gaining a triumph, because they dislike his strictness and are dissatisfied with their booty.

"Licentia" also appears frequently in the conflict between patricians and plebeians. Even here it sometimes has important military consequences. In 3.66.4 the leaders of the Aequi and the Volsci tell their men that "dissolvi licentia militandi morem nec pro communi iam patria Romam esse". The "licentia" here refers to struggles between patricians and plebeians. Generally the plebeians are accused of "licentia" (3.21.7; 5.29.9), but in 3.9.6 Gaius Terentilius Harsa, a tribune of the plebs, complains to the people of the "superbia" of the senate and says the consuls should not make a law of their own caprices "non ipsos libidinem ac licentiam suam pro lege habituros".

"Licentia" is frequently coupled with "libido". In 28.24.9 when the Roman soldiers become discontented and rebellious, Livy says that their camp is run according to the dictates of "licentia" and "libido". "Omnia libidine ac licentia militum, nihil instituto ac disciplina militiae aut imperio eorum qui praeerant gerebatur". In 25.21.5, Fulvius allows his soldiers to draw up their battle line "ad libidinem" and suffers an appalling defeat. The "libido" or "libidines" of tyrants are also an important topic and often lead to rebellion among their subjects. Pleminius (29.17.13, 18) and Appius Claudius (3.44.1, 3.48.1, 3.50.7, 3.50.9, 3.51.7, 3.45.8, 3.57.3) both prov-

oke hatred and violence because of their "libido". In the Preface, Livy deplores the "libidines" of people in his own time - "nuper divitiae avaritiam et abundantes voluptates desiderium per luxum atque libidinem pereundi perdendique omnia invexere". (1 pr 12).

The "lazy" vices - "socordia", "desidia", "inertia", "segnitia" - do not play nearly such an important role in Livy's work as in Sallust's. Occasionally "socordia" has a damaging effect on the performance of an army in battle (24.40.10; 25.20.6) and Livy says that "socordia" and "neglegentia" are typical of the Campanians (25.13.7), but in general these qualities are not of central importance. However it is interesting to note how they are employed by Appius Claudius, who exploits the traditional moral values in his rhetoric. Haranguing the soldiers on why they should go to war in winter, he says that they themselves "contendantque et animis et corporibus suis virilem patientiam inesse, et se iuxta hieme atque aestate bella gerere posse nec se patrocinium mollitiae inertiaeque mandasse tribunis". (5.6.5.).

Hardiness in warfare was an important part of the aristocratic tradition and Livy reflects the view that a life of retirement devoted to "otium" was somewhat shameful. "Otium" is frequently used in the quite unobjectionable sense of "peace" (3.30.2, 3.31.1, 3.32.5, 3.48.2, 3.14.2, 3.17.4, 1.32.2), but it also appears as idleness, which is dangerous to military prowess. In 1.22.2, Tullus

Hostilius thinking the nation was growing decrepit ("senescere") through "otium" sought excuses for going to war. In 21.24.1, Hannibal is afraid that his troops will be demoralized by "otium". Numa Pompilius, with a similar fear that his troops will degenerate, initiates a religious programme "ne luxuriarent otio animi". (1.19.4). In their hatred of Appius Claudius, the plebeians performed all their military duties badly and "segniter, otiose, neglegenter, contumaciter omnia agere". (2.58.7). "Otium" also appears occasionally as a cause of sedition in the plebs. In 2.28.6, the consuls decide to hold a levy, since "otio lascivire plebem". And in 2.52.2, the same notion is even more strongly expressed. Livy says "ex copia deinde otioque lascivire rursus animi, et pristina mala, postquam foris deerant, domi quaerere. Tribuni plebem agitare suo veneno, agraria lege".

Another of the vices which Livy condemns is "cupido" or "cupiditas". The most common objects of "cupido" are listed in 6.35.6, where he says "immodice cupido inter mortales est, agri pecuniae honorum". On this occasion patrician "cupido" precipitates a conflict with the plebs. "Cupido regni" or "cupido imperii" also plays an important role, especially in the early books (1.6.4, 1.17.1, 1.23.7, 1.34.1, 1.34.7). It can lead to criminal behaviour, as in the case of Tullia, who, distressed by her husband's lack of "cupiditas" and "audacia" (1.46.6), plots a series of family murders in order to become queen. "Cupido regni" is also important during the Punic Wars. Hanno upbraids

the Carthaginian senate for sending Hannibal to conduct the war against the Romans, describing him as "iuvenem flagrantem cupidine regni". (21.10.4). "Cupiditas" can also lead to the unconstitutional usurpation of power, as in the case of Appius Claudius and the decemviri. Their "cupiditas" prompts them to defend their "iniusta dominatio". (3.39.7).

"Ambitio" is another vice which has important effects on the conduct of politics and warfare. It is frequently associated with bribery in Livy, or at least with unfair canvassing (2.27.10, 3.35.2, 3.47.4, 4.25.12, 7.15.13). Currying favour with the soldiers often leads to disaster for the generals (43.11.10, 43.14.7, 45.37.12). In 45.36.8, Livy says that the "ambitio" of generals often causes them to make mistakes in warfare by giving in to the demands of their soldiers - "iam nunc nimis saepe per ambitionem peccari". "Largitio" also plays an important part in Roman politics, particularly in winning the allegiance of the plebs (4.48.13, 4.13.10, 4.13.3).

Livy clearly believes that some form of moral decline took place in Rome, characterized by the increase of "avaritia" and "luxuria", strife between the orders and the degeneration of the military virtues. He undoubtedly simplifies complex political and economic changes by presenting them in moral terms, and he idealizes the past, but his general sincerity is beyond question. Moral decline was an issue which Livy took seriously.

## Footnotes - Chapter 1

1. D.C. Earl, The Political Thought of Sallust, Amsterdam, 1966, p. 18.
2. See D.C. Earl, Ibid. pp. 19-22  
R.E. Smith, The Aristocratic Epoch in Latin Literature, Sydney, 1947, pp. 8-10.  
Tenney Frank, "The Scipionic Inscriptions", CQ XV (1921), pp. 169ff.
3. See Appendix for a discussion of these qualities.
4. Earl, Sallust, p. 23.
5. Similar qualities are praised in the epitaphs of freedwomen recorded in R.O.L. V.4, Nos. 53, 61, 85, 108 and 110.
6. Smith, P. 20 ff.
7. Smith, p. 20.
8. See Ovid's comments on this type of poetry in Tristia, 2.491-494.
9. Smith, p. 22.

10. Gellius informs us that this was almost certainly Scipio Africanus. (7.8.5).
11. Smith, p. 23.
12. Earl, Sallust, p. 26.
13. See above, p. 9.
14. For a useful discussion of this view see Otto Skutsch, Studia Enniana, London, 1968, p. 94.
15. The development and significance of the concept of "otium" in Roman moral thought is thoroughly discussed by Jean-Marie André in L'otium dans la vie morale et intellectuelle romaine, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1966.
16. Smith, p. 25.
17. There are some scattered references to the pursuit of money and "gloria" in Heaut. 112-117, but these activities bring little joy in the play.
18. However it should be noted that Lucilius considers the plebs equally culpable in this respect.
19. See chapter 4 p. 122, p. 148ff and chapter 5 pp. 196ff., 210ff., 241ff. below for a discussion of the treatment of these subjects by the love elegists.



20. See André's comments on Catullus and "otium" p. 217.
21. See David O. Ross, Style and Tradition in Catullus, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 80-95 for a discussion of Catullus's vocabulary, including his use of moral terminology.
22. The treatment of moral issues by Vergil and Horace is a vast and fascinating area in itself, which it would be impossible to tackle here. Fortunately considerable study has been done on the subject and a few of the most valuable works on it are listed in the bibliography. See especially Commager ch. 4, Wilkinson, Georgics, chs. 6 and 7, Johnson ch. 4.
23. Plautus, of course, employs parody of some features of the aristocratic ideal. However, unlike the love elegists, he never gives these burlesques a Roman setting, nor does he utter any criticism of the aristocratic code in his own right. Therefore he cannot be said to challenge it openly.
24. For a useful discussion of the position of the "novus homo" in Rome see H.H. Scullard, "The Political Career of a Novus Homo" in Cicero, ed. T. A. Dorey, London, 1965, pp. 1-26.

25. Quintus Fabius Pictor (born c. 254B.C.) seems to have anticipated the later Roman historians in his preoccupation with morality (fr. 15, 20, 25, 27), but he wrote in Greek, not Latin, and very little of his work survives. For a brief but informative discussion of his work see E. Badian's article in Latin Historians, ed. T.A. Dorey, London, 1966, pp. 2-7.
  
26. Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta, ed. Henrica Malcovati, 2nd ed., Milan, 1955. Abbreviated in this thesis to ORF<sup>2</sup>.
  
27. H.H. Scullard has some interesting comments on this speech in Roman Politics 220-150B.C., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2nd ed., 1973, p. 221f.  
 For other useful discussions of Cato's work see also Scullard pp. 113, 152-176, 220-225 and Appendix 1.  
 Badian in Latin Historians, pp. 7-11.  
 D.C. Earl, The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome, pp. 44-47.
  
28. Dorey, Latin Historians, p. ix.
  
29. Badian, p. 9. However Badian also points out that after the publication of the Annales Maximi by P. Mucius Scaevola (cos. 133B.C.), which made important historical sources available to a wide public, historians without personal political

involvement began to spring up in the classes below senatorial rank. He dismisses most of these contemptuously as "mere entertainers" (p. 20).

30. The propagandist use of a political vocabulary laden with moral overtones has been thoroughly researched by modern scholars. The most useful works on the subject are :  
 R. Syme, The Roman Revolution, Oxford, 1939, ch. 11.  
 J. Hellegouarch, Le Vocabulaire Latin des Relations et des Partis Politiques sous la République, Paris, 1963.
31. For reasons of space Caesar's works have not been discussed here. It is felt that the works of Cato, Cicero and Sallust offer adequate illustration of the treatment of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline in Latin prose, without reference to Caesar.
32. For an illuminating discussion of this concept in his work see H. Roloff, Maiores bei Cicero, Gottingen, 1938. The literature on Cicero's moral and political thought is vast and only a few of the most important works have been cited in the bibliography.
33. For a fuller discussion of Sallust's treatment of

the theme of moral decline and his use of moral terminology see Appendix pp. 302-321 in this thesis. The subject of Sallust's moral and political thought has been extensively discussed by D. C. Earl in :

- The Political Thought of Sallust, Amsterdam, 1966.
- The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome, London, 1967, ch. 2.

Other indispensable works on this subject are Ronald Syme, Sallust, C.U.P., 1964, and Sallust, comp. Viktor Pöschl, Darmstadt, 1970.

## Footnotes - Chapter 2

1. The usage of moral terminology by Sallust and Livy is discussed below in the appendix. It is strongly recommended that this be read before chapter two.
2. On the words inadmissible in the metre of love elegy see my comments on p. 65 below. In general my practice for such words has been to scan the elegists' works firstly for use of a cognate adjective or adverb (when the noun was metrically inadmissible) and then for nouns of similar meaning which were admissible. However I found very scant usage of either of these in elegy. See footnote 8 below for terms examined.
3. D. C. Earl, The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome, Thames and Hudson, Great Britain, 1967, p. 20.
4. For a more detailed discussion of Tibullus's treatment of the ideal society see below p. 67ff.
5. See my comments on p. 69 below.
6. On the elegists' use of the motif of "the lover as a soldier" see chapter 5 passim. Critical references on the elegists' use of military themes are given in the footnotes to chapter 5.
7. On the subject of "libertas" see Chaim Wirszubski, Libertas as a political idea at Rome during the late republic and early principate, C.U.P., 1950.
8. Of course some of these are inadmissible because of

the metre of love elegy. The words chosen for special study in the works of Sallust and Livy were as follows: "abstinentia", "aegritas", "continentia", "probitas", "concordia", "fides", "pietas", "labor", "industria", "audacia", "virtus", "gloria", "disciplina", "prudentia", "ratio", "clementia", "gravitas", "dignitas", "pudor", "pudicitia", "castitas", "modestia", "ambitio", "avaritia", "cupido/cupiditas", "largitio", "licentia", "vitium", "superbia", "crudelitas", "dominatio", "sumptus", "lascivia", "luxuria", "luxus", "libido", "sotordia", "desidia", "ignavia", "inertia", "otium", "segnitia", "nequitia." Of these, several were metrically inadmissible in love elegy, notably "dominatio", "largitio", "abstinentia", "continentia", "aegritas", "crudelitas."

Consequently the cognate adjectives for these nouns were checked whenever possible, or alternatively words similar in meaning were examined. However this search was almost completely fruitless, thus confirming the impression that the elegists take a completely different view of moral decline from that of the historians.

9. On the later reputation of the "ludi" as a place of temptation see Tertullian, De Spect. 21, Sen. Epp. 7, Juvenal 6.60ff., Petronius, Sat. 126.
10. The best recent critical discussion of this elegy (4.11) is E. Reitzenstein, "Über die Elegie des Propertius auf den Tod der Cornelia" ANML, 1970, 6. Wiesbaden Steiner, 1970. The elegy is discussed in more detail in ch. 4, pp. 145-147 below.
11. On Catullus's transformation of the concept of "fides" see David O. Ross, Style and Tradition in Catullus, Harvard University Press, 1969,

p. 35ff.

On "fides" as an aristocratic ideal see D. C. Earl, The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome, pp. 33, 45, 76-7,

Matthias Gelzer, The Roman nobility, trans. R. Seager, Oxford, Blackwell, 1969, p. 62ff. and Lily Ross Taylor, Party Politics in the Age of Caesar, Berkeley, 1949, p. 41f.

On its use by Propertius see J. P. Boucher, Etudes Sur Properce, Paris, 1965, ch. 4.

12. Boucher, Etudes, p. 100.
13. On Propertius's use of legal terminology to describe this pact of "fides" see the comments of Butler and Barber, The Elegies of Propertius, Oxford, Clarendon Press, p. 313.
14. See above, p. 42.
15. The true nature of Propertius's attitude towards Augustus and his family has been a subject for acrimonious dispute. The traditional view, upheld by Camps, Romussi, Butler and Barber, is that Propertius eventually became a wholehearted supporter of Augustus. However Nethercut, Paratore, Sullivan and Mallett see most of his praise of Augustus as ironical and consider him anti-Augustan. (See bibliography for details).
16. Propertius's treatment of "gloria" is very complex. A useful article on the subject is J. H. Brouwers, "Properce et la gloire", Phoenix 23 (1970), pp. 42-61.
17. Some of these words are, of course, inadmissible in the metre of love elegy. See footnote 8 above.

13. Ovid delivers a masterly diatribe against the evils of "otia" in this passage. For a discussion of it, see below p. 252-253.
  
19. Ovid's use of parody in the love poems is witty and extensive and Vergil is one of his chief victims. On his use of parody in general see J. M. Frécaut, L'Esprit et L'Humour Chez Ovide, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1972, pp. 179, 226-231.  
On his parody of Vergil see E. J. Kenney, "Nequitiae Poeta", Ovidiana ed Herescu, Paris, 1958, p. 203,  
and E. Döpp, Virgilischer Einfluss in Werk Ovids, Munich, 1969.



## Footnotes - Chapter 3

1. Although Tibullus does not explicitly mention the term "Golden Age" here, it seems reasonable to suppose that he had it in mind, since he contrasts this vision of the past with the "ferrea... saecula" (35) of his own time.
2. K. F. Smith, The Elegies of Albius Tibullus, N.Y., 1913, reprinted Darmstadt, 1964, p. 429.
3. Gordon Williams, Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 501-502.
4. e.g. in 1.1.53-54, 1.3.56, 1.7.7ff., 2.1.31-34.  
It seems to me that Messalla has an important symbolic function in Tibullus's poetry as the representative of the real world of the public career, which often conflicts with Tibullus's ideal world of rustic bliss. So far as I know this symbolic literary function of the figure of Messalla has not been explored by critics, although several useful articles have been written on the Messalla poems. Among the most important are F. Klingner, "Tibullus Geburtstagsgedicht an Messalla" (I 7), Eranos 49 (1951), pp. 117-136, and J. F. Elder, "Tibullus, Ennius and the Blue Loire", TAPA 96 (1965), pp. 97-105.
5. Paul Jal, La guerre civile à Rome, étude littéraire et morale, Paris, 1963, p. 319. On the theme of the Golden Age in Greek and Latin literature see Williams, p. 275ff. and H. C. Baldry, "Who Invented the Golden Age?" CQ (N.S. v.2), 1952, pp. 83-92.  
K. F. Smith lists numerous versions of the

motif in the works of ancient authors in  
Tibullus, p. 246.

6. J. P. Elder, "Tibullus : Tersus Atque Elegans",  
Critical Essays on Roman Literature, Elegy  
and Lyric, ed. J. P. Sullivan, London,  
Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, p. 81.
7. On the influence of pastoral poetry on Latin  
elegy see below, ch. 6, p. 264.
8. On Propertius's use of conversational formulae  
see Margaret Hubbard, Propertius, Duckworth,  
London, 1974, pp. 47, 87f.
9. The Rape of the Sabines was a popular subject in  
Latin literature, but the treatment of  
Romulus was far more dignified in traditional  
versions than in Ovid's. Compare his treatment  
in Livy 1.9, Dionysius Hal. Ant. Rom. 2.30 (in  
Greek), Plutarch, Romulus 14 (in Greek) with  
Ovid's characterization.
10. On the view that the "aetia" are genuinely patrio-  
tic literary exercises see  
J. P. Boucher, Études sur Properce, Paris,  
1965, ch. 6.  
Contra, see  
J. P. Sullivan, Propertius : a critical introd-  
uction, C.U.P., 1976, pp. 134-133.  
J. P. Hallett, Book IV : Propertius' Recusatio  
to Augustus and Augustan Ideals (diss. Harvard,  
1971), p. 98ff.
11. Propertius's use of the "recusatio" is discussed  
in more detail in p. 279ff. Critics are div-  
ided over the proper interpretation of poem  
3.3 and Propertius's other "recusationes".

Williams sees them as an oblique method of praising Augustus (G. Williams, Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 47), while Sullivan believes they exhibit genuine reluctance to do so (Sullivan, Propertius, pp. 122-127) and Nethercut considers them ironical (see especially W. R. Nethercut, "The Ironic Priest", AJPh, 1970, pp. 335-407, in which Propertius 3.1-5 are discussed).

12. Cw Livy's references to the Palatine (1.12.4), the Tiber (1.4.4) and the buildings of Romulus and Remus on the Palatine and the Aventine (1.6-7).
13. I believe this initial impression is misleading. However Grimal adheres to it as the correct interpretation of the entire poem. See P. Grimal, Les intentions de Properce et la composition du livre iv des Elegies, Brussels, Coll. Latomus, vol. 12, 1953. He also argues in the same work that the remaining elegies on aetiological themes in Book 4 are patriotic and pro-Augustan.
14. Poem 4.2 has not been discussed in this thesis, since it contributes little to the understanding of Propertius's treatment of the aristocratic ideal and moral decline. However a useful discussion of it can be found in Thomas A. Suits "The Vertumnus Elegy of Propertius", TAPhA 1969, pp. 475-486.
15. See Livy 1.11.8.
16. Cw Ovid's humorous treatment of the "capti iuvenes captaeque puellae" (Am. 1.2.27) and of his own

"captiva ... mente" (Am. 1.2.30) in Cupid's mock triumph in Amores 1.2. For the general notion of the lover as a captive of Cupid and a slave of his mistress see F. O. Copley, "Servitium Amoris in the Roman Elegists", TAPA 78 (1947), pp. 285-300.

17. William S. Anderson, "Hercules Exclusus : Propertius 4.9". AJPh, 1964, pp. 1-12.
18. Anderson, p. 7.
19. J. P. Sullivan, Propertius : a critical introduction, Cambridge/New York, C.U.P., 1976, p. 43f.
20. Ibid., p. 138.
21. For a more detailed discussion of this poem see below, p. 161ff.
22. See, for instance, A.A. 3.85-88 and A.A. 1.100ff.
23. For a more detailed discussion of Amores 3.8 see below, p. 241ff.
24. A. S. Hollis, "Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris", Ovid, ed. J. W. Binns, London and Boston, 1973, p. 105.
25. cw Livy, 1.9.9-16.
26. A. E. Wardman, "The Rape of the Sabines", CQ, 1965, p. 102.
27. Hollis, "Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris", Ovid, p. 86.
28. See, for example, Vergil's reference to cattle

browsing on the site of Rome (Aen. 8.360-361),  
Livy's account of the founding of the city and  
its humble buildings (1.7ff.) and Horace's  
description of the material simplicity of life  
in early Rome (Odes 2.15.10ff.).

29. Sallust B.C. 13.1.

## Footnotes - Chapter 4

1. Michael Putnam points out that the poem is  
"enriched by parody of both hymn and epic,  
particularly Ennius and Lucretius".  
Michael Putnam, Tibullus : A Commentary,  
University of Oklahoma Press, U.S.A.,  
1973, p. 88.
2. K. F. Smith, The Elegies of Albius Tibullus,  
Darmstadt, 1964 (reprint of 1913 edition),  
p. 270.
3. cw Propertius 4.5, 1.8, 2.16.
4. Putnam, Tibullus : A Commentary, pp. 88-89.
5. The influence of comedy on Tibullus's character-  
ization of both Marathus and himself is  
clearly apparent in this poem. For a discus-  
sion of similar characters in the plays of  
Plautus and Terence see George E. Duckworth,  
The Nature of Roman Comedy, Princeton, 1952,  
ch. 9, esp. pp. 246, 258-9.  
On the subject of Marathus see also C. M. Dawson,  
"An Alexandrian Prototype of Marathus,"  
A.J.Ph. 65 (1946), pp. 1-15.
6. e.g. Sallust, B.C. 10-13 (esp. 13.1)  
Livy, 38.17; 39.1; 39.6; 39.7.
7. For an extremely useful and detailed discussion  
of the concept of "libertas" in Roman  
thought see Chaim Wirszubski, Libertas as a  
political idea at Rome during the late  
republic and early principate, C.U.P., 1950.

8. For a description of the cult of the Lares familiares see Cyril Bailey, Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome, O.U.P., 1932, p. 51.

On the worship of the Genius of Augustus in connection with the cult of the Lares, see Horace, Odes 4.5.32ff. A description of the official organization of this worship made by Augustus in 7 B.C. can be found in Albert Grenier, The Roman Spirit in Religion, Thought and Art, Cooper Square Publishers Inc., N.Y., 1970, p. 376.

9. For the original version of the proverb "fortes fortuna adiuvat" see Terence, Phormio 203. Ovid uses a similar version to Tibullus in Heroides 19.159 and again in Ars amatoria 1.608.

See also Vergil, Aeneid 10.284, where the tone is serious.

10. F. O. Copley, Exclusus Amator. A Study in Latin Poetry, published by the American Philological Association, Michigan-Oxford, 1956, pp. 91-107.

11. Ibid., pp. 102-103.

12. K. F. Smith, The Elegies of Albius Tibullus, p. 224.

13. cw Propertius 1.14.15f. and Seneca Epist. 90.41ff.

14. For instances of the use of this image by other writers see K. F. Smith p. 309.

15. See Ovid's comments in Tristia 2.447ff.

16. Julia Haig Gaisser, "Structure and Tone in Tibullus I, 6", A.J.Ph. 42 (1971) p. 203.
17. Ibid., p. 211.
18. See, for instance, the comments by Georg Luck in The Latin Love Elegy, London, Methuen and Co., 1959, p. 66  
and Saara Lilja in The Roman Elegists' Attitude to Women, Helsinki, 1965, p. 229-230.  
(Lilja calls this "a real eulogy to Delia's mother", pp. 229-230). Even if Tibullus does believe that Delia's mother is acting as a "lena" for her daughter, as Gaisser and others suggest (see Gaisser p. 210), I cannot see why this should preclude genuine affection for her on the part of Tibullus.
19. For a fuller discussion of this passage see above pp. 74-76. For critical references on the Golden Age see ch. 3, footnote 5.
20. K. F. Smith lists corresponding passages in the works of other writers in his commentary on this poem, pp. 244-245.
21. Ibid., p. 246.
22. George Duckworth has useful chapters on characterization (ch. 9) and moral tone (ch. 10) in Roman comedy in The Nature of Roman Comedy, Princeton, 1952.
23. A. A. Day, The Origins of the Latin Love Elegy, London, 1938, p. 90.
24. All of these precepts have their counterparts in Greek or Roman comedy and Propertius



underlines his debt to the genre by including the advice (4.5.41-44) :

"nec te Medeae delectent probra sequacis  
 (nempe tulit fastus ausa rogare prior)  
 sed potius mundi Thais pretiosa Menandri,  
 cum ferit astutos comica moecha Getas."

25. For a discussion of these see below p. 147ff.
26. However Propertius does not suggest that greed and caprice existed only in contemporary Rome. In line 26 he points out accusingly that "formosis levitas semper amica fuit" and in lines 29-30 he cites the fates of two Greek women, Eriphyle and Creusa, as an awful warning against greed.
27. This is not the only occasion where Antony is vilified by Propertius. Elsewhere in his work (3.11 and 4.6) Antony and Cleopatra appear as forces which pose a threat to the Roman way of life - not only in military terms, but also in terms of morality. However some critics see poems 3.11 and 4.6 as being ironical in tone. For a discussion of them see below p. 216ff.
28. "his olim, ut fama est, vitiis ad proelia ventum est" (2.6.15). It is not entirely clear what Propertius means by these "vitia". Butler and Barber explain "Unchastity not jealousy" (H. E. Butler and E. A. Barber, The Elegies of Propertius, Oxford, 1933, p. 200), but if they are right the lust of Romulus and the Centaurs must be included in the definition of "unchastity". Certainly jealousy played no part in the rape of the Sabines.

29. Butler and Barber, p. 200.
30. They must have been very far off - before the advent of rapists like Romulus.
31. Of course Propertius is glaringly inconsistent in claiming on the one hand that human beings have always been fickle and on the other that the Sabines led a life of strict chastity.
32. So did Ovid, but he thoroughly approved. See especially his comments in A.A. 1.56ff.
33. There is piquant (although probably unintentional) humour in this line, in view of Propertius's laments in 2.6.35 over the neglect of temples and the consequent promiscuity of women.
34. See, for example, 1.15.26, 3.20.22, 2.28.5-6.
35. For a discussion of "fides" and its significance in Propertius's work, see above p. 46ff.
36. For a discussion of the elegists' attitudes to war, see below ch. 5. Critical references on this subject are given in the footnotes to ch. 5.
37. Butler and Barber suggest that these may be pseudonyms for Galla and Postumus (p. 337).
38. e.g. 3.5.5, 3.12.5, 3.20.3.
39. e.g. 1.12.7-8, 2.26.27, 3.20b.15-30.

40. fidelity (1.4.16, 2.20.34, 3.20.24); piety (3.13.50); simplicity (3.13.25).
41. It is obvious from 1.36 that Propertius had such an epitaph in mind when writing the poem. See Lilja's comments on epitaphs commending the "univira" on p. 237. On the content of the elegy itself see E. Reitzenstein "Über die Elegie des Propertius auf den Tod der Cornelia", ANM, 1970, 6. Wiesbaden Steiner, 1970. See also Hubbard's comments on p. 145ff.
42. e.g. in 1.8 and 2.16.
43. F. Robertson, "Lament for Paetus - Propertius 3.7", T.A.Ph.A. 1969, p. 380.
44. Cf. Propertius 1.17.13-14, Tibullus 1.3.35-40, Ovid (Am. 2.11).
45. Camps (Propertius Elegies, Book III, Cambridge, 1966) and Butler and Barber emphasize its pathetic rather than its didactic aims in their introductions to the poem, but Boucher sees it rather as having elements of an Epicurean tract on the themes that man is his own worst enemy and that greed brings disaster (J. P. Boucher, Etudes Sur Properce, Paris, 1965, p. 130).
46. Robertson, p. 377.
47. e.g. Horace, Satires 1.1, 1.6, 2.6, 2.7.
48. There have been several attempts to explain this, none of them entirely successful. Robertson quotes Gildersleeve's ingenious but

improbable suggestion that "it represents merely the accommodation Paetus would have preferred in ideal circumstances".

(Gildersleeve, A.J.Ph. 4 (1883) p. 209, quoted by Robertson on p. 384).

49. On the funeral "elogia" see p. 1ff. of this thesis and on the language of historiography see the appendix.
50. See Amores 1.4, 2.2.20ff., 2.7, 2.8, 2.19 etc.
51. Fränkel seems to think so in his discussion of the poem. H.F. Fränkel, Ovid, a Poet Between Two Worlds, Berkeley, California, 1945, p. 19.
52. On the cult of Venus Verticordia and its association with feminine chastity see Robert Schilling, La religion romaine de Venus, Paris, 1954, p. 226ff.
53. Admittedly the "lena" of elegy is portrayed as a personal maid rather than a brothel-keeper (as Williams points out in Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958, p. 542ff.). Nevertheless the word had unpleasant connotations in common usage as the following statement from the Digesta shows : "lenas eas dicimus, quae mulieries quaesturias prostituunt." (Dig. 23.2.43).
54. Fränkel argues in this way in Ovid, A Poet Between Two Worlds, pp. 90-91.
55. See Williams's comments on this phrase, p. 546.

56. See Cicero's precepts on the composition of the funeral "laudatio" in Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2.341ff. A most useful background book on Roman rhetoric is George Kennedy, The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, Princeton, 1972.
  
57. Several modern scholars have discussed the status of the "vir" of Latin elegy. See, for example, the comments of Lilja on p. 38 and of Copley on p. 100ff. It seems unlikely that the "vir" is to be considered legally married to the girl.
  
58. On the subject of the censorship, its dignified place in Roman society and the men who held the office see Jaako Suolahti, The Roman censors. A study on social structure : Annales Acad. Scient. Fennicae B, CXVII, Helsinki, 1963.
  
59. cf Livy 1.9, Dionysius Hal; Ant. Rom 2.30, Plutarch, Romulus 14.
  
60. See the use of the word "turba" in Sallust, B.C. 37.3, Quintilian 2.16.2, Cicero, Verr. 2.4.66.
  
61. On the ritual of the "salutatio" see Lily Ross Taylor, Party Politics in the Age of Caesar, Berkeley, 1949, pp. 30, 42, 43.
  
62. On political canvassing, *ibid.*, p. 62ff. esp. p. 67.
  
63. On re-marriage see Seneca, De Matrimonio (72.7). Lack of modesty in dress (Valerius Maximus 6.3.10) and excessive "cultus" (Livy 4.44.11ff.) were deplored as much as re-

- marriage. On singing and dancing as signs of moral depravity see Macrobius, Sat. 3.14 and the comments of Cornelius Nepos in his Epaminondas, 1f. See also J.P.V.D. Balsdon's discussion of these subjects in Roman Women, Bodley Head, London, 1962, pp. 274-275.
64. On the legal rights of freedwomen see Max Kaser, Das römische Privatrecht, I, Munich, 1955. Handbuch der Altertum  
II : 3.3.1. p. 103.
65. E. J. Kenney, "Nequitiae Poeta", Ovidiana, Paris, 1958, p. 201.
66. For a more detailed discussion of Amores 3.8 see below, p. 241ff.
67. On the differences between Catullus's treatment of the theme and Ovid's see the comments of A. G. Lee in "Tenerorum Luser Amorum", Critical Essays on Roman Literature, ed. Sullivan, London, 1962, pp. 160-164.
68. A. S. Hollis (ed.), Ovid, Ars Amatoria, Book I Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 111.
69. See Sallust's comments in B.C. 24-25 on the women who helped Catiline.
70. On the figure of the "dives amator" in comedy see K. E. Smith, Tibullus, p. 301 and J. A. Hanson, "The Glorious Military", Roman Drama, London, 1965, esp. pp. 51-68.
71. On the subject of bribery and the purchase of office in Roman politics see L. R. Taylor, p. 67 and Cicero's comments in Verr. 1.22.

## Footnotes - Chapter 5.

1. As evidence of the Romans' approval for agriculture see Cicero's comments in De Senectute passim, where it is highly praised. (However contra see Sallust B.C. 4.1). A typical paragon of the soldier/farmer in Roman history is Cincinnatus. See Livy's comments in 5.26.7-10.
2. On the treatment of the triumph theme in Latin elegy see G. K. Galinsky, "The triumph theme in the Augustan elegy", HS, 1969, pp. 75-107. For a discussion of its treatment by Propertius see below p. 203ff; and by Ovid p. 224ff.
3. See especially the comments of David Ross in Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry : Gallus, Elegy and Rome, C.U.P., 1975, p. 153ff. Ross says that the poem is "in manner and matter thoroughly Augustan" (p. 157). There is also an extensive discussion of the poem's relationship to the Aeneid in Buchheit, V. "Tibull II 5 und die Aeneis", Philologus, 109 (1965) pp. 104-120.
4. Very little has been written on this elegy. However Edward O'Neil argues that the real meaning of the poem is that Tibullus is urging Macer "not to forsake love poetry in preference to epic." (Edward O'Neil, "Tibullus 2.6 : A New Interpretation", CP 62 (1967), p. 166). Even if this is true, it makes no difference to the humour inherent in Tibullus's use of military terminology in the poem.
5. On similar figures in Roman comedy see J. A.

Hanson, "The Glorious Military", Roman Drama, ed. T. A. Dorey and D. R. Dudley, London, 1965, pp. 51-68.

6. J. P. Elder has some useful comments on the tension between the ideal world and the real world in this poem in "Tibullus : Persus Atque Elegans", Critical Essays on Roman Literature, Elegy and Lyric, London, 1962, p. 92ff.
7. cf Prop. 2.13.35-36, Ovid, Tristia 3.3.73-74.
8. The treatment of the lover as a soldier in the works of the other elegists is discussed below (Propertius, p. 206; Ovid, p. 229f.). The classic critical commentary on the motif is :  
 A. Spiess, Militat omnis amans. Ein Beitrag zur Bildersprache der antiken Erotik, Diss. Tübingen, 1930.  
 More recent works containing helpful short discussions of it are :  
 L. P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, C.U.P., 1955, p. 73f. (on Ovid)  
 R. J. Baker, "Miles annosus : the military motif in Propertius", Latomus 27, 1968, pp. 322-349 (on Propertius).
9. On Tibullus 1.10 and the anti-war attitudes expressed in it see  
 W. Steidle, "Das Motiv der Lebenswahl bei Tibull und Propertius", WS 75 (1962), pp. 100-141.
10. On the traditional association of Lydia and Ionia with decadence see Herodotus, Hist. 6.12.
11. On the controversial question of whether or not Propertius's praise of Augustus is sincerely



meant, see R. J. Baker, "Miles annosus : the military motif in Propertius", Latomus 27, 1968, pp. 322-349.

P. Grimal, Les intentions de Properce et la composition du livre IV des Elegies, Brussels, Coll. Latomus, vol. 12, 1953.

Baker, Grimal and Boucher argue that his praise of Augustus is sincere. However, contra, see :

W. R. Nethercut, "The Ironic Priest", AJPh, 1970, pp. 385-407.

- Propertius and Augustus (diss. Columbia, New York, 1963).

Margaret Hubbard, Propertius, Duckworth, London, 1974, pp. 104-105.

J. P. Sullivan, Propertius : a critical introduction, C.U.P., 1976.

J. P. Hallett, Book IV : Propertius's Recusatio to Augustus and Augustan Ideals (diss. Harvard, 1971).

See also footnote 18, below.

12. This poem almost certainly pre-dates 20 B.C. when the standards of Crassus were recovered through diplomacy. However references to a Parthian campaign are frequent in Augustan poetry even after the recovery of Crassus's standards in 20 B.C. and may be evidence of a popular belief that Augustus intended a full scale invasion of Parthia (Ovid's comments on this subject in A.A. 1.177-8, 202 are interesting specimens of this type of poetry). On the subject of Augustus and Parthia see A. S. Hollis, Ovid, Ars Amatoria I, pp. 65-73.

13. Notably J. P. Boucher, who, although he acknowledges Propertius's personal refusal of the military career, still sees the poem as a

"hommage à la grandeur du prince" (Boucher, Etudes sur Properce, p. 137).

14. R. J. Baker, "Miles annosus : the military motif in Propertius", Latomus, 1968, p. 325.
15. G. K. Galinsky, "The Triumph Theme in the Augustan Elegy," WS, 1969, p. 80.
16. The opposition of most Romans to philosophy as an impractical, time-wasting activity can be deduced from Cicero's statements in De Off. 1.19, 2.2, Acad. pr. 5, De Div. 2.7.
17. See H. E. Butler and E. A. Barber, The Elegies of Propertius, Edited with an Introduction and Commentary, Oxford, 1933, p. 245.  
W. A. Camps, Propertius : Elegies Book II, Cambridge, 1967, p. 201.
18. On the traditional view that these elegies show genuine admiration for Augustus and should be interpreted as seriously intended patriotic exercises see :  
B. Romussi, "Lo sviluppo di Properzio verso la concezione di una nuova poesia politica ed etiologica", Philologus 94 (1940), pp. 175-196.  
W. A. Camps, Propertius : Elegies Book III, Cambridge, 1966, p. 104ff.  

Contra, see :  
W.R. Johnson, "The emotions of patriotism : Propertius 4.6". California Studies in Classical Antiquity 6 (1973), pp. 151-180.

  
E. Paratore, L'Elegia III, 11 e gli Atteggiamenti politici di Properzio, Palermo, 1936.  
W. R. Nethercut, "Propertius, 3.11", TAPA 102, (1971), pp. 411-443.  
J. P. Sullivan, Propertius : a critical introduction, C.U.P., 1976, pp. 21ff., 144ff.

19. Sullivan points out the inapposite nature of the mythological examples used by the poet, Propertius, p. 21.
20. See above, footnote 18.
21. Ibid.
22. On this matter see my comments in the Introduction and in chapter 6, p. 255ff.
23. Margaret Hubbard, Propertius, Duckworth, London, 1974, p. 108.
24. See above, footnote 18.
25. On the figure of the "vates" in Augustan poetry see J. K. Newman, The Concept of Vates in Augustan Poetry, Collection Latomus 89, Brussels, 1967.
26. Galinsky, "The triumph theme", p. 86 n. 29.
27. Sullivan, Propertius, p. 144.
28. On the subject of Propertius's quest for a new literary direction in Book 4, see Hubbard, Propertius, p. 116ff. Hubbard argues that the two honorific poems 4.6 and 4.11 were probably commissioned works, around which Propertius constructed the remainder of the book. (Hubbard, p. 117).
29. R. J. Baker, "Miles annosus", p. 324.
30. Once again this is a matter for controversy. My own view is that Propertius made some concessions to Augustan values under the influence of

Maecenas, but never whole-heartedly accepted them. The articles cited in footnote 18 above give a cross-section of views on the subject.

31. On this subject see Ovid's remarks in R.A. 371-385, discussed below pp. 294-295.
32. Galinsky, "The triumph theme in the Augustan elegy", NS, 1969, p. 91.
33. See the comments of Galinsky in Aeneas, Sicily and Rome, Princeton, 1969, pp. 5, 167, 205, 219, 234 on this subject.
34. H.F. Fränkel, Ovid, A Poet Between Two Worlds, Berkeley, California, 1945, p. 18.
35. See footnote 8, above.
36. L. P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, C.U.P., 1955, p. 73.
37. The picture of the two bulls fighting over a heifer has a certain dignity in its use by Vergil in Georgics III.215ff. However, by transferring it to such an absurd context as this and using it as a simile to describe the conflict of rival lovers, Ovid lends it a quality of total bathos. On the subject of Ovid's parody of Vergil see :  
 E. J. Kenney, "Nequitiae Poeta", Ovidiana, ed. Herescu, Paris, 1958, pp. 201-209 (esp. p. 209).  
 S. Döpp, Virgilischer Einfluss in Werk Ovids, Munich, 1969.
38. Fränkel (rightly, I believe) sees this poem as epitomizing the conflict between "otium" and

"negotium" in the Roman way of life.

Ovid, A Poet Between Two Worlds, p. 17.

39. There is a stimulating discussion of Ovid's use of legal terminology in E. J. Kenney, "Ovid and the Law", YCS, vol. 21, Studies in Latin Poetry, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 243-263.
  
40. On Ovid Amores 2.7 and 2.8 and the humorous technique of these poems see J. M. Frecaut, L'Esprit et l'Humour Chez Ovide, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, Grenoble, 1972, pp. 182, 223.
  
41. See, for instance, Cicero's emotional speeches of self defence and thanks delivered to the Senate and the Quirites after his recall from exile in 57 B.C. (Orationes post reditum in Senatu and ad Quirites).
  
42. See below p. 289ff. for a discussion of this.
  
43. cw Sallust's defensive remarks about his decision to write historiography rather than pursue a public career (BC 4.1-2). See also D. C. Earl's comments on the pressure applied to young men to induce them to take part in public affairs (Moral Tradition, p. 23).

44. See also pp. 92-93 above on Ovid's treatment of the Golden Age in this poem.
45. Ovid mentions among these the temple of Caesar (presumably the "aedes divi Iulii", consecrated by Augustus, near the Rostra). If the couplet is genuine, it seems to constitute bitter criticism not only of the aristocratic ideal, but also of the imperial family. However some doubt exists concerning its authenticity, as E. J. Kenney notes in Ars amatoria and other love poems, Oxford Classical Texts, 1961, p. 87.
46. E. J. Kenney, "Nequitiae Poeta", Ovidiana, ed. N. I. Herescu, Paris, 1958, p. 205.
47. A. S. Hollis, "Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris", Ovid, ed. J. W. Binns, London and Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, p. 113.
48. G. K. Galinsky, "The triumph theme in the Augustan elegy", WS 3 (1969), p. 76.
49. Galinsky, Ibid., pp. 97-101.  
 Contra, see  
 H. D. Meyer, Die Aussenpolitik des Augustus und die augusteische Dichtung, Böhlau, Verlag, Köln, Graz, 1961, pp. 82-86.  
 A. S. Hollis (ed.), Ovid, Ars Amatoria, Book I, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977.  
 However it should be noted that Hollis is more cautious than Meyer in interpreting this eulogy as seriously intended.
50. E. J. Kenney, "Nequitiae Poeta", p. 209.

## Footnotes - Chapter 6.

1. On the devotion of the aristocracy to the pursuit of power and wealth through politics and the army see D. C. Earl, The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome Great Britain, 1967.  
 - The Political Thought of Sallust, Amsterdam, 1966.  
 Of the aristocrats' contempt for poetry, there can be little doubt. Seneca quotes Cicero as saying that even if he had his life over again he still would not bother to read the works of the neoteric poets (Epist. 4.9.5) and this may be taken as a typical example of the aristocratic attitude towards poetry with no didactic intention. Even serious poetry was only grudgingly accepted for its function as a handmaid to political excellence (Cic. Pro Archia Poeta).
  
2. Thus the following scholars seem to display excessive zeal and ingenuity in their efforts to characterize the elegists as pro-Augustan :  
 P. Grimal, Les intentions de Propertius et la composition du livre IV des Elegies, Brussels, 1953.  
 B. Renussi, "Lo sviluppo di Propertius verso la concezione di una nuova poesia politica. ed etiological", Philologus 94 (1940), pp. 175-196.  
 while others are equally anxious to portray them as anti-Augustan, e.g.  
 J. F. Hallett, Book IV : Propertius' Recusatio to Augustus and Augustan Ideals, (diss. Harvard, 1971).  
 Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, C.U.P., 2nd ed., 1970, p. 351. (Otis's comments are on the Metamorphoses, but could apply equally to the love poetry).

3. H. F. Cherniss, "Biographical fashion in literary criticism", University of California Publications in Classical Philology 12 (1943), pp. 279-292. (Reprinted in Critical Essays on Roman Literature).
4. Sullivan expresses some valuable cautions against the tendency of critics to split life and art completely in Propertius, ch. 2.
5. The dates of publication cannot be established with certainty, but it seems likely that Tibullus's poetry was published some time before his death in 19 B.C., while the Propertian Monobiblos probably appeared in 26 B.C., with the three remaining books following some time between 23 and 19 B.C.
6. Tibullus seems to hint at this in 1.1.19.
7. On the elegists' anti-war attitudes, which seem to derive at least partly from their response to the civil strife between Augustus and Antony, see :  
K. J. Pratt, "Roman Anti-Militarism", CJ (1955), pp. 21-25.  
T. MacLoughlin, "Nunc ad bella trahor", Latomus 25 (1966), pp. 287-290. (This article discusses Tib. 1.1.78, 1.3.1, 1.7.9, 1.10.13).
8. This is the central theme of Paul Jal, La guerre civile a Rome, étude littéraire et morale, Paris, 1963.
9. On Augustus's moral legislation see J.F.V.D. Balsdon, Roman Women, Bodley Head, London, 1962, pp. 76-79.  
Propertius was not alone in his opposition to it. Suetonius records that there were popular



demonstrations by the equestrians against it  
(Suetonius, Aug. 34).

10. Sullivan, Propertius, p. 9-10.
11. On Valerius Messalla Corvinus's patronage of literature see R. Syme, The Roman Revolution, Oxford, 1939, p. 460.
12. See, for example, R. J. Baker's comments in "Miles annosus : the military motif in Propertius", Latomus 27, 1968, p. 324.
13. Notably Paratore and Nethercut. See chapter 5 n. 18 and the bibliography for details of their works on the subject.
14. See Solmsen's comments on "pax" and "rura" as Augustan themes in "Tibullus as an Augustan Poet", Hermes 90 (1962) p. 297f.
15. Seneca, Contr. X, praef. 4ff.
16. Ovid gives the grounds of his exile as "carmen et error" (T. 2.207). The "carmen" was certainly the Ars amatoria, while the nature of the "error" remains a subject for speculation. The evidence and the theories about it are collected in J. C. Thibault, The Mystery of Ovid's Exile, Berkeley, California, 1964. Yet, even if the "carmen" was a mere pretext for banishing Ovid for a more serious offence, it is significant that Augustus could consider it a sufficient pretext. It certainly suggests that he was profoundly offended by the anti-establishment values expressed in the poem.
17. Sullivan, Propertius, p. 68.

18. On the poetry of the neoterics see  
K. Quinn, The Catullan Revolution, Cambridge  
revised impression, 1969, esp. ch. 4.  
On their style, metre and vocabulary see  
David O. Ross, Style and Tradition in Catullus,  
1969, pt. 2.
  
19. On the "slender style" cultivated by the devotees  
of Callimachus see Georg Luck, The Latin Love  
Elegy, London, 1959, p. 71ff.
  
20. On Ovid's humour see  
J. M. Frécaut, L'Esprit et l'Humour chez Ovide,  
Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, Grenoble,  
1972.  
On Tibullus's humour see  
Ernst Zinn, "Elemente des Humors in  
augusteischer Dichtung", Gymnasium 67, 1960,  
pp. 41-56, 152-155.
  
21. A. A. Day, The Origins of Latin Love Elegy,  
Oxford, 1938, p. 116.
  
22. Ibid., p. 76.
  
23. For a valuable discussion of these characters see  
George Duckworth, The Nature of Roman Comedy,  
Princeton, 1952, ch. 9.
  
24. On the influence of Hellenistic elegy on Latin  
love elegy see  
F. Jacoby, "Zur Entstehung der römischen  
Elegie", RhM 60 (1905), pp. 38-105.  
G. Luck, The Latin Love Elegy, London, 1959.  
A. Rostagni, "L'influenza greca sulle origini  
dell'elegia erotica latina", L'influence  
grecque sur la poésie latine de Catulle à  
Ovide : Entretiens Fond. Hardt II, Geneva,  
1956, pp. 59-92.  
P. Boyancé, "Properce", Ibid. pp. 169-222.

25. See above, p. 261.
26. On the poetry of the neoterics see footnote 13, above.
27. The fictitious nature of much of the supposedly autobiographical poetry of the elegists has not always been sufficiently appreciated by critics. A. W. Allen has some salutary comments on the misleading quest for "sincerity" by modern scholars in "Sunt Qui Propertium Malint", Critical Essays On Roman Literature, Elegy and Lyric, p. 110ff. However the elegists' own statements should be enough to convince us that they are not writing strictly factual autobiography (e.g. Ovid, Am. 3.12.41-44).
28. On the funeral eulogy see chapter 4, footnote 46. On the debt of Propertius 4.11 to speeches of this kind see Hubbard, p. 145ff. and Day, pp. 74-75.
29. Day, p. 64.
30. Very little can be known with certainty about the work of Gallus. However David O. Ross attempts to re-construct an outline of his works on the basis of comments made about them by other writers, notably Vergil and Propertius. See David O. Ross, Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry : Gallus, Elegy and Rome, C.U.P., 1975, ch. 5.
31. Tibullus's silence on certain subjects (such as Augustus and his own literary predecessors) is surprising. On the significance of such omissions in his poetry see J. P. Elder, "Tibullus : Tersus Atque Elegans", Critical Essays on Roman Literature, ed. J. P.

Sullivan, Cambridge, 1962, p. 70.

32. On these themes in Tibullus's poetry see  
F. Solmsen, "Tibullus as an Augustan poet",  
Hermes 90 (1962), pp. 295-325.
  
33. On Tibullus's poetry on Messalla see  
G. Funaioli, "Sul Panegirico di Messalla",  
Maia 5 (1952), pp. 175-181.  
On the influence of genre on poetic composition and on the conventions of the encomium see  
F. Cairns, Generic composition in Greek and Roman poetry, Edinburgh, 1972.
  
34. Williams, Tradition and Originality, p. 47.
  
35. On the influence of Callimachus on Propertius see  
N. V. Clausen, "Callimachus and Roman poetry",  
GRBS 5 (1965) p. 193ff.  
T. M. Klein, "The role of Callimachus in the development of the concept of the counter genre", Latomus 33 (1974), pp. 217-231.  
H. E. Pillinger, "Some Callimachean influences on Propertius, Book 4", HSCP 73 (1969) pp. 171-199.  
Margaret Hubbard, Propertius, Duckworth, London, 1974, ch. 3.
  
36. The phrase is Sullivan's (Sullivan, Propertius, p. 63).
  
37. For more detailed discussions of these poems and critical references see chapter 5, pp. 203-205, 216-221 and footnote 18.
  
38. I thoroughly concur with A. W. Allen's comments on the folly of seeking "sincerity" in the form of realistic details of emotion and biographical events from the elegists' works.  
(A.W. Allen, "Sunt Qui Propertium Malint", p. 1ff.).

## Footnotes - Appendix

1. See Append. p.305 of this thesis and also the comments by D.C. Earl in The Political Thought of Sallust, C.U.P. 1961, pp. 13ff, 41-42, 45-46, 52.
2. One of these appearances of the word "concordia" is in the second letter to Caesar, who is urged to attempt a regeneration of morals in order to bring back "concordia". Since the Epistles to Caesar are considered by most scholars to be spurious, they have not been discussed at length in this appendix. However, in spite of the uncertainty of their authorship, they reflect several of the characteristic aristocratic beliefs on moral decline, especially in their treatment of laziness and extravagance (see below footnotes 5 and 10).
3. Note that on this occasion Sallust seems to visualize moral decline as a cyclical process.
4. Earl, Sallust, p.95.
5. In the moral programme outlined in the first Epistle to Caesar it is urged that the young should be taught to pursue "probitas" and "industria", not "sumptus" and "divitiae" (Ep. 1.7.2). In Ep. 2.7.8. the same sentiment is repeated. The author says

that where riches are considered important: "ibi omnia bona vilia sunt, fides, probitas, pudor, pudicitia".

6. Syme, Sallust, p. 242.
7. On Sallust's use of antithesis see Syme p. 265.
8. Syme, Sallust, p. 253.
9. Earl, Sallust, p. 15.
10. In the first Epistle to Caesar the author argues that in order to save Rome it will be necessary to suppress "sumptus".
11. See above, Appendix p. 311.
12. On Livy's Preface see P. G. Walsh, "Livy's Preface and the Distortion of History", AJPh (1955), pp. 369-383.
13. Livy's version of this may be affected by anti-plebeian bias. It seems to me that bias of this kind is evident elsewhere in his opposition to plebeian agitation for agrarian reform, which he calls "the poison of the plebs" ("suo veneno, agraria lege", 2.52.2). However Walsh points out that he is equally critical of the aristocracy

(P. G. Walsh, Livy - His Historical Aims and Methods, C.U.P., 1961, p. 69) and Laistner also asserts that "it is not ... fair to accuse him of narrowly aristocratic sympathies"

(M.L.W. Laistner, The Greater Roman Historians, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966, p. 89).

14. This does not necessarily imply that he believed in the literal truth of Roman traditional religion.

P. G. Walsh has a helpful discussion of this subject in Livy, His Historical Aims and Methods, C.U.P., 1961, p. 46ff.

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